

Essays on Poems of Love and War

# Cultural Poetics And Sangam Poetry



**Govindaswamy Rajagopal**

Sun International Publishers

**CULTURAL POETICS  
AND  
SANGAM POETRY**



# **CULTURAL POETICS AND SANGAM POETRY**

**GOVINDASWAMY RAJAGOPAL**



Sun International Publishers

## **CULTURAL POETICS AND SANGAM POETRY**

GOVINDASWAMY RAJAGOPAL

Associate Professor of Tamil

Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies

University of Delhi, Delhi – 110 007

Email: [grajagopaldu@gmail.com](mailto:grajagopaldu@gmail.com)

Mobile: 9818487876

Published by

Sun International Publishers

PG-105, Possangipur

Janakpuri, New Delhi – 110 058

Mobile: 9999500276

Email: [suninternational1989@gmail.com](mailto:suninternational1989@gmail.com)

© 2016 Govindaswamy Rajagopal (b. 1960)

**ISBN: 978-81-928130-8-0**

**Rs. 275/-**

This book is published with the financial grant sanctioned by the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, University of Delhi, Delhi – 110007 under the Research & Development Grant 2015–16 for the project entitled “*Cultural Poetics and the Early Tamil Literature* (c. 200 B.C.–A.D. 600)”, vide no. RC/2015/9677, Dated 15.10.2015.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photo-copying, recording otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Requests for permission should be addressed to the author.

Cover Image – Courtesy: [www.hdnicewallpapers.com](http://www.hdnicewallpapers.com)

*For  
my Mother*

**Dhanammal Govindaswamy**



## Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Foreword</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xv
<i>Author's Note</i>	xix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xxiii
I. Same Word – Multiple Meanings: Cultural Connotations	1
II. Ethical Principles in Sangam Culture	31
III. Birds and Beasts: Codes/Symbols in the Scheme of Sangam Love Poems	77
<i>References</i>	109
<i>Index</i>	113





## Acknowledgements

This book, though not all-encompassing, comprising three essays on a unique recurring Tamil term ‘*cāṇṟōr*’, the five appropriate love themes such as *kuṟiñci* (sexual union of lovers), *mullai* (patient waiting of a wife for her husband), *marudam* (sulking of a wife over the infidelity of her husband), *neydal* (anxious waiting of a lover/wife for her beloved/husband) and *pālai* (separation of a beloved from his ladylove), familial and heroic culture of the Tamils of the bygone era is an attempt to understand the classical and delightful literary qualities of the world class “Sangam Literature” (c. 100 B.C.–A.D. 250).

Though the book is indeed a small one, without the great support and service of many kind persons, it would be not possible to see it in the present form. My sincere thanks to the authorities of Delhi University, especially to Prof. Malashri Lal, the Chairperson and the members of Research Council who provided me the financial aid under the scheme of Research and Development Grant 2015–16 which paved the way for this book. My warm gratitude is to Dr. John Samuel, the Director and the members of the Editorial Board, JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF ASIAN STUDIES, Chemmancherry, Chennai, Prof. A. Arivu Nambi, the Editor, and other members of the Editorial Board of

the proceedings of the National Seminar on “SANGA ILAKKI-YAṆGAḻUM KŌṬPĀḌUGAḻUM”, Subramaniya Bharatiyar School of Tamil Studies, Pondicherry University, Puducherry, and Prof. Jaroslav Vacek, the Editor-in-Chief and the members of the Editorial Board, PANDANUS’ 13/2, NATURE IN LITERATURE, ART, MYTH AND RITUAL, Philosophical Faculty, Institute of South and Central Asia, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic who had published the essays of this book earlier.

I wish to extend my thanks to Ms. Rashi and Mr. Souvik Datta, M.Phil. Research Fellows in Comparative Indian Literature in our department for correcting the revised draft of the essays of this book. I owe my earnest thanks to Prof. Vanathu Antoni, Senior Fellow of our department who fine-tuned the language of these essays so sincerely with professional touch.

My heartfelt gratitude is to Prof. D. Murthy, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and Prof. K. Chellappan, Former Director, State Institute of English, Chennai for willingly rendering an erudite foreword and a scholarly preface respectively to the book amidst their hectic academic commitments.

My special thanks to Dr. Venkata Ramaiah Gampa, Assistant Professor of Telugu of our department for his constant encouragement, and beautifully designing the cover page besides professionally type setting the essays of this book.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the earnest support of my wife Dr. N. Rajeswari who suggested a suitable image and aesthetic design for the cover page and my son Mr. Ilam Paridi who skillfully fine-tuned the designing of the cover page and type setting of this book.

05<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Govindaswamy Rajagopal

## Foreword

With immense pleasure and delight, I write this foreword to the book '*Cultural Poetics and Sangam Poetry*' penned by Dr. Govindaswamy Rajagopal. This small volume comprising three lengthy articles talks about the cultural life of the ancient Tamils exquisitely essayed in the Sangam classics. The author has attempted to critically analyse and intriguingly divulge the multiple facets of Sangam literature in the perspective of cultural poetics in this book. The 'diachronic' study of *cāṇṟōr* (homonymy), 'socio-cultural' study on the ethical ethos of Sangam people and the 'objective correlative' study on the nuanced feelings and actions of the birds and beasts show the author's profound knowledge and flawless understanding of the Sangam classics.

The first chapter titled '*Same Word – Multiple Meanings: Cultural Connotations*' not only broadly explains the divergent meanings of the specific Tamil word '*cāṇṟōr*' but also meticulously elucidates the historicity of this peculiar word. Usually, words are formed and continued to exist in accordance with the socio-historical contexts that determine their semantic elements. This chapter establishes the recurring term eloquently by citing fine examples from Sangam period to modern times. The author's notion, examination and elucidation of the aforesaid word would be, indeed, very interesting to lexicographers. The second chapter titled '*Ethical Principles in Sangam Culture*' analyses the unique Tamil word '*āram*' and explicates its

multiple meanings in terms of culture. ‘*Aram*’, a unique Tamil word, perhaps has no counterpart in any language. ‘*Dharma*’, the virtual Sanskrit word may be the closest one to the aforesaid Tamil term by its meaning. However, it does not express the comprehensive meanings like that of the Tamil term *aram* as rendered in Sangam classics. The Sanskrit term ‘*dharma*’, in my understanding, is predominantly connected either with religious rituals or rebirth. But *aram* astonishingly refers to the amalgamation of all good deeds/fine actions or noble conducts of human beings that he or she needs to uphold throughout his/her life for the sake of his/her and societal well-being. With unfailing views and cognizance, Dr. Rajagopal has delightfully dealt with this illustrious word and amusingly brought forth its multi-faceted orientations. He has meticulously elucidated the *aram* of ‘*akam* feelings’ and that of ‘*puram* deeds’ separately. His unambiguous knowledge of Sangam poems helps him comprehend the term *aram* culturally so well with the supposed-to-be the conducts of common men, householders, valiant heroes and their friends, kings and their subjects, poets *et al*.

Quite naturally, poets in the Sangam era had praised the heroic skill, warfare method, feats of the victorious kings and what not obviously for some gains in the scenario of post-war. But the zenith/greatness of Sangam poems is that, some prominent poets advise the champion kings to be good enough not only to their subjects but even urge them to be merciful to their enemy kings and their subjects as well. At times they even severely ridicule the barbarian acts of the former in the interest of others. This atypical feature finds its due representation chronicled pragmatically in a number of Sangam poems that aesthetically articulate ethics to be upheld in one’s heroic life too. The author Rajagopal has discoursed elaborately and effectively these lofty Tamil *aram*/ethics in this chapter.

In what is known as “Objective Correlative” in the English literary criticism of 20<sup>th</sup> century – ‘correlating a set of external objects, a situation, a chain of events to describe the inner meanings of a literary text’ – had been, in fact, splendidly fashioned two millennium years ago itself by prodigious Sangam poets for everyone’s enjoyment and appreciation. With their phenomenal literary creative geniuses, the Sangam poets had produced enormous amount of love poems so amazingly describing the subtle ‘interior feelings’ of mankind through the indigenous Tamil literary modes called ‘*uḷḷurai uvamam*’, ‘implied metaphor’ and ‘*iracci*’, ‘hidden meanings’. Sanskrit scholars have been trying hard but unsuccessfully to equate these literary techniques with the ‘*vakrokti siddhānta*’ (Theory of Oblique Expression) postulated by Kuntaka (c. A.D. 950–1050), a Kashmiri Sanskrit poetician and literary theorist. These two literary techniques of simile and metaphor had in fact become a magic wand in the hands of skillful poets of the bygone era to sketch the nuanced feelings of *talaivan* (hero) and *talaivi* (heroine) in the *akam* poems. With impeccable perception and proper understanding, Dr. Rajagopal has brilliantly dealt with these literary concepts and has chronicled the earliest Tamil musings in thriving. I congratulate him on this scholarly work.

I wish and expect many such monographs/books in this line of thought would come out from him in future too. I hope, this albeit a short volume will be a treatise of interest to the lovers of Sangam poems.

Prof. D. Murthy  
Professor of Tamil  
Deptt. of Modern Indian Languages  
Aligarh Muslim University  
Aligarh – 202 002



## Preface

Govindaswamy Rajagopal as a serious scholar of Tamil literature has already given valuable insights into Tamil literature, both popular and classical by applying sociological and psychological theories.

In '*Beyond Bhakti: Steps Ahead*' (2007), he has applied Lévi-Strauss's structuralist theory to the analysis of folk legends and traced the evolution of a people's religion in South India based on folklore as an antidote to the upper class Hinduism. In '*Mind and Conduct: Behavioural Psychology in the Sangam Poetry*' (2015), he has analysed Sangam *akam* poems in the light of the principles of behavioural psychology put forward by J.B. Watson, B.F. Skinner *et al.* Thereby, he has shown significant patterns in the behaviour of characters in Sangam literature such as 'adoptive behavior' of the heroes and heroines, the 'assertive behaviour' of mates and friends and the 'abnormal behaviour' of heroines at the loss of their lovers and 'demonic behaviour' of aggressive kings.

The present volume is a collection of the following three articles.

- I. Same Word – Multiple Meanings: Cultural Connotations
- II. Ethical Principles in Sangam Culture
- III. Birds and Beasts: Codes/Symbols in the Scheme of Sangam Love Poems

The first article is a fascinating study of the evolution of meaning of a single word '*cāṇṟōṇ*' from Sangam period down to



the present day. The author shows with good examples that the word meant ‘men of valour’ in the heroic age. It later meant ‘men of noble character’ and then ‘men of justice’ in *Cilappadigāram*, ‘*nāyaṇmārs*’ and ‘*ālvārs*’ and ‘the excellent poets of Sangam age’ in the medieval period, and ‘eminent Tamil scholars’/‘prominent Tamil dignitaries’ in the modern period. This shows an evolution in the concept of perfection in Tamil. The history of language is the spiritual history of people and certainly language reflects life.

The author also shows how several translators have failed to capture the exact meaning of this word in certain texts because ‘words are not simply words, they partake of a culture’. Susan Bassnett said that language then is the heart within the body and the interaction between the two results in the continuation of life energy. Translating such a word as ‘*cāṇrōṇ*’ embedded in Tamil culture is a Herculean task. The untranslatability can be overcome by metonymic displacement and by giving brief notes. Post-Structuralists have referred to the plurality and instability of meanings even in a single context and translation is a never ending process and meaning is also a process, never a finished product.

The second article is a scholarly study of ethical principles in Sangam culture. In fact, the very word ‘*tiṇai*’ meant ‘code’ or ‘ethics’. Sangam culture was characterized by simple living and high thinking whereas Sangam poetry was marked by lofty thoughts and an artless art. In the heroic age, people hailed the brave man who excelled in the battlefield for their land. Later came a definition of ‘*aram*’ as ethical principle, a code of virtue. The author then says that truthfulness was a universal virtue and he relates this to ‘*pugaḷ*’ (honour) without blame. Tamils were ready to give up life for fame, but won’t accept ‘*paḷi*’ (blame)

even with the world. Here is perennial code as an opposition between ‘*nāṇ*’ (shame) and ‘*paḷi*’ (blame) related to death and world. Kant said that in the kingdom of ends, everything has either value or dignity; value can be exchanged or replaced but not dignity of life. That is why the Tamils equated honour with life.

Dr. Rajagopal later speaks of several instances in which the Tamils upheld honour e.g. Kaṇaikkāl Irumporai who chose to die in prison because of the royal servant’s delay in giving him water as the author rightly says, ‘self-esteem was to man’, as ‘chastity was to woman’. Moreover, even in the battlefield ethics was more important than victory. Heroes choose to die if they receive wound in their back. The poet Picirāndaiyār chose to die for the sake of king Kōpperuñcōḷaṇ whom he had not even seen before.

The author points out that democratic way of life was the basis of ancient Tamil culture and woman, its centre. He adds that marriages were made after courtship. Parents were not willing to marry their daughters to mighty kings in order to preserve their dignity. Extra-marital relationships of even kings were condemned by poets.

Rajagopal then elaborates on the dual role played by the poets as representatives of the people as well as propaganda agencies of the King’s policies. Though they admired the heroism of the kings, they often played the role of peace makers. They also persuaded the kings to give up cruel actions in the battle field. They refused to praise the king who had committed an act of cruelty and maintained their dignity before the royal power. The author rightly concludes that poets were the backbone of *puṇam* poems as they advocated ethical values, but the author’s claim that there was more concern with ethics in *puṇam* than *akam* is debatable as *akam* is also based on ethical codes, though not so explicitly stated.

The last article is a beautiful analysis of Sangam *tiṇai* poems with reference to the birds and beasts in each region. In Sangam *akam* poems landscape is more than the background. It is the primary ‘*poruḷ*’ or ‘the principal source of meaning’ and there is a deep bond between the human characters and the plants, birds and beasts. The landscape is the meta-language of the variety of moods.

Dr. Rajagopal has made a systematic study of each of the five *tiṇais* and the relationship between the human drama and the flora and the fauna. He gives the modern equivalents of the plants and all the birds and beasts in each landscape. Not only does nature help the protagonists express their inexpressible emotions hidden in the silent language of nature, but makes love part of a universal process in which there is an orchestration of various elements.

Finally, the author shows that the human characters had deep sympathy for all life. The vocabulary by which the ancient Tamils labeled even minute insects revealed their encyclopedic knowledge of nature.

In conclusion, this slender but scholarly fortune gives glimpses of the glorious culture and civilization of ancient Tamils embodied in Sangam literature. The study also suggests possibilities of further research particularly in the ethics and aesthetics of classical Tamil as well as the flora and fauna of Tamil land.

Rajagopal’s meticulous study of *akam* and *puṛam* poems of Sangam classics from the perspective of cultural poetics will be endearing one for those who are interested in understanding the unique culture of ancient Tamils.

Prof. K. Chellappan  
Former Director,  
State Institute of English  
Gnanamoorthy Nagar, Ambattur  
Chennai – 600 053, Tamil Nadu.

## Author's Note

No doubt, India is a unique country, and perhaps has no parallel. Though its main ethnicities are only three (Aryan, Dravidian and Mongoloid), major language families four (Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austroasiatic and Sino-Tibetan) and minor language families two (Tai-Kadai and Great Andamanese) yet it has countless communities of divergent faiths speaking more than 122 major languages and 1599 other languages (as per the **Census of India of 2001**). Needless to say that every language or linguistic community has its own distinct ethnic culture with different customs, traditions and refined qualities developed and cherished for years, as any lingua franca is not just a medium or tool of communication. Out of the 22 vernaculars recognized by the Union Government of the Republic of India as its Scheduled Languages, Tamil was the first language to be formally christened as a classical language of the country on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2004 followed by Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013) and Odia (2014).

Being an independent and a distinctive language of India, Tamil has a rich cultural heritage spanning a period of over 2000 years. Historical sources show that there was a close connection

between the culture of ancient Tamils and that of the people who lived in the ancient cities *viz.* Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. As Tamil ethnicity historically belonged to ‘Heroic Age’ (c. 3000 B.C.–A.D. 300), the ethnic group then upheld equally at par both *interior feelings* (love feelings) and *exterior actions* (heroic deeds) in their lives as the two eyes. This fact can be corroborated with the available notions on *akam* (interior) and *puṛam* (exterior) defined candidly by Tolkāppiyar in his grammatical work *Tolkāppiyam* (c. 200–100 B.C.), the earliest Tamil literary text. The ancient Tamil literary corpus called “Saṅgam Literature” comprising 2381 lyrics, in fact, is the great aesthetic repertoire of these two literary themes.

Needless to say that all literary creations including essays on literary themes, either implicitly or explicitly, talk about some cultural aspect of a given language of an ethnicity. In a literary text, even a simple or ordinary word, besides its literal or primary meaning, may invoke a ‘unique cultural connotation’ of an ethnic group. To realise its ‘hidden meaning’, one needs to probe or decode the given word contextually rather than just literally. In this endeavour, the period in which the literary text produced is paramount for comprehending its “Cultural Poetics”.

As observed elsewhere, we are aware of the fact that man is a social being. Subsequently, the manner/conduct/behaviour of one’s ‘inner-self’ (heart) may be generally termed as ‘culture’. The term refers to ‘a way of life of a group of people, cumulative deposit of their knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notion of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving’. Culture in its

broadest sense is cultivated behaviour, that is the totality of the person's learned, accumulated experience which is socially transmitted, or more briefly, behaviour through social learning. Contrary to this, the actions or reflections of man's 'outer-self' (body/physique) may be termed as 'civilization'. No one's/no ethnicity's culture and civilization remain intact forever. Naturally, they change/transform in due course of time according to the demand of situations. A person who acts in certain manner at a particular time shall have change in his/her conduct of the 'inner' and 'outer-selves'. The socio-political-economic-religious conditions of a given period do act as factors behind his/her culture and civilization. The vicissitudes and fluctuations that influence the 'inner' and 'outer-selves' of a person/an ethnicity can be termed as 'cultural mobility'.

Considering the "Sangam Literature" i.e. 'the Poems of Love and War' too is 'not fully self-contained', the essays in the present book try to decipher some unique words and predominant themes of some classical Tamil texts by intimately connecting them to their respective historical and social context. An analysis of understanding a literary text by corroborating its relevant facts derived from other disciplines such as anthropology, history, sociology, culture etc. and a host of other factors that determine a text's meaning is what is known as 'New Historicism' or 'Cultural Poetics' in literary criticism. This could recover the original ideology which gave birth to the text and in turn the text could help to disseminate throughout a culture. Keeping in mind the principle i.e. "the doctrine of the plurality of meaning" put forward by exponents of Post-Structuralism and Post-Modernism, this book comprising three essays, attempts to figure out some unique cultural aspects essayed splendidly in the classical Sangam poems (c. B.C. 100–A.D. 250).

The first essay titled “*Same Word – Multiple Meanings: Cultural Connotations*” expressively deliberates on a unique word ‘*Cāṇrōr*’ – a specific recurring term of cultural significance. By expounding the chronological account of the birth and development of this particular word and its spread from ancient times to modern times, and its evolutionary changes in different contexts that have been employed in Tamil literary works since ancient times, the article brings forth the cultural mobility or shift that has taken place in the lives of Tamils. The second essay titled “*Ethical Principles in Sangam Culture*” vividly dialogues on the virtuous life of Tamils of the bygone era. It poignantly deals with almost all ethics or virtues upheld by Tamils in their *puṛam* (exterior actions) lives which include familial life, food culture and beliefs. The last essay titled “*Birds and Beasts: Codes/Symbols in the Scheme of Sangam Love Poems*” briefly addresses the nuanced appropriate *akam* (interior feelings) themes of Sangam poems. It demonstrates how some birds and beasts are skillfully and unequivocally depicted as codes/symbols just to essay ‘the interior feelings’ of man and woman. The study, though not all-encompassing, speaks out certain fascinating facts about the familial culture of Tamils of the Heroic Age by considering and analyzing some excellent poems of five *tiṇais* viz. *kuṟiñci*, *mullai*, *marudam*, *neydal* and *pālai*.

I hope, these essays may kindle an interest to revisit the entire Sangam literary works in a cultural perspective for understanding their eternal fine literary qualities.

## Abbreviations

A.D.	=	<i>Anno Domini</i> i.e. “in the year of the Lord” (Christ)
AKU.	=	<i>Aṅkurūṇūru</i>
ANU.	=	<i>Akaṇāṇūru</i>
B.C.	=	Before Christ
c.	=	<i>circa</i> i.e. “approximately”
com.	=	commentator
CPM.	=	<i>Cilappadigāram</i>
ed.	=	editor (or) edition
eds.	=	editors
e.g.	=	<i>exempli gratia</i> i.e. “for example”
<i>et al.</i>	=	<i>et alii</i> i.e. “and others”
etc.	=	<i>et cetera</i> i.e. “and other things”, or “and so forth”.
<i>Ibid.</i>	=	<i>Ibidem</i> i.e. “in the same place”
impn.	=	impression
KLT.	=	<i>Kalittogai</i>
KRM.	=	<i>Kamba Rāmāyaṇam</i>
KRT.	=	<i>Kuṇuntogai</i>
NRI.	=	<i>Naṛṇṇai</i>
<i>Op. cit.</i>	=	<i>Opere citato</i> i.e. “in the work cited”
PNU.	=	<i>Puraṇāṇūru</i>
PPU.	=	<i>Paḍiṛruppattu</i>
SL.	=	Source Language
Skt.	=	Sanskrit
TL.	=	Target Language
<i>Tol.</i>	=	<i>Tolkāppiyam</i>
tr.	=	Translation





# I

## **Same Word – Multiple Meanings: Cultural Connotations\***

**I**ndia writes in many languages and speaks in many more voices. But it is mainly by an act or literary process called ‘translation’, mostly in English, that we Indians are aware of other regions’ history and geography, religion and philosophy, mathematics and science, culture and civilization and of course their literature. As it is observed by scholars elsewhere, ‘translation, a literary act, does not simply mean the business of interpreting words of one language into another’. “Of all types of translation, literary translation is the most difficult one, and of all kinds of literary translation, translation of poetry is the most difficult one. Translations have their in-built difficulties. It is almost impossible to retain both meaning and form of the source language (SL) in the target language (TL), especially if the two languages differ in their structure, syntax etc.” (Parameswaran 1995: 50). ‘True literal’ or ‘word to word’ translation of poem(s) of a SL into a TL arguably cannot always carry the soul of the former. Nevertheless, a translator is expected to keep his translation close to the original in meaning and spirit, while making it artistically beautiful and naturally fluent. But it is to be conceded that there is every possibility of losing a bit of the content and

beauty of the SL during its transference into the TL. Hence it is obligatory on the part of a translator to have a basic knowledge and profundity over the culture of people belonging to two different languages that are perhaps not contemporaneous too. And further, **the translator needs to know the contextual meaning of word, phrase or passage of a language while he or she attempts to represent its spirit into another language.** Otherwise any hard work put in by him or her in this regard would be termed as ‘a futile exercise’. Subsequently, the translator would be scornfully branded as ‘a traitor’. A word which originally meant something in an age or period, not necessarily shall mean the same forever in any language. For instance, ‘*nanri*’ – the word being used in formal contexts, meaning ‘thanks’, or ‘(I am) thankful (to you)’ in the contemporary Tamil (hereafter Tamil), in fact, had meant differently to denote ‘a good deed’ or ‘a fine action’ in ancient Tamil literature (Sangam Literature, c. 200 B.C.–A.D. 200). Contrary to this, some words that convey multiple meanings could render a specific one depending upon the context or situation in which they occur. Let us consider how a unique Tamil word ‘*cāṇrōr*’ renders different meanings at different contexts and its various interpretations, translations and transcreations rendered by Tamil scholars belonging to different times, places and cultures.

‘*Cāṇrōr*’ is one of the unique literary terms in Tamil that has been occurring frequently in its literature spanning more than 2000 years. It is a noun exclusively referring to the masculine plural (sing. *cāṇrōṇ*). The term ‘*cāṇrōṇ*’ normally denotes a ‘scholar’ (*aṇṇan*), ‘learned’ (*kaṇrōṇ*), ‘great man’ (*periyōṇ*) – (Kathiraiver Pillai 1984: 620), ‘man of noble qualities’ (*naṇpaṇbu niraṇḍavan*) – (Varadarajanar 1974: 14). This term in *Tirukkural* (TKL) primarily refers to ‘*cāṇrāṇmai*’ i.e. sublimity/virtue/goodness)<sup>1</sup>. *Cāṇrōṇ*, the esteemed person is highly respect-

ed by everybody as a ‘great man’ mostly for his high knowledge and fine character. The term strikingly refers to an ‘exceptional warrior’, ‘great man’, ‘noble man’ and ‘excellent poets of Saṅgam period’ (Vaiyapuri Pillai 1982: 1397). Evidently, the notions of the excellent characteristics or attributes of the great persons change from time to time as befitting the prevailing significant culture of the Tamils. The excellent attribute was ‘valour’/ ‘prowess’ (*vīram* in Tamil) in the Saṅgam (hereafter Sangam) age. Nonetheless, the same term meant differently to denote the ‘erudite scholarship-wisdom-righteousness’ in the post-Sangam period; ‘impeccable quality of justice’ in *Cilappadigāram* (CPM); ‘holiness’/‘divinity’ during the Bhakti Movement days; ‘extraordinary poetic skill of Sangam works’ in *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam* (KRM), and ‘the dignity’ or ‘eminence’ and or ‘prominence’/‘scholarship in Tamil’ in the present Tamil society. Arguably, poets employed this term in their works keeping its meaning well in their mind. But somehow some commentators, scholars and translators seemed to have misunderstood its contextual meaning and thereby misinterpreted it in their scholarly works. Let us see how this peculiar term is translated or interpreted differently rather contrarily by such scholars.

***Cāṇṟōṇ* – ‘The Warrior’ or ‘Noble Man’ (Sangam Age – c. 200 B.C.–A.D. 200):**

The ancient Tamil society consists of several clans virtually shaped into many kingdoms and empires during the Sangam age. The kings of the ancient period have shown utmost interest in expanding their kingdoms rather than protecting their own territories. So, often countless battles/wars were waged. Hence, there arose a great need for warriors, physically strong and mentally shrewd to protect their land. In fact, the ‘great warriors’,

emerging triumphant from battles/wars, were highly respected and regarded. They were suitably felicitated with lavish gifts/awards/honours. Against this backdrop, a woman poet named Poṇmuḍiyār, on assuming household life, enlists her societal duty and that of others from the dominant patriarchal point of view of the ancient times in the following *Puranāṇūru* (PNU), (Four Hundred Poems on War and Wisdom) poem. This is a fine poem greatly admired and transcreated into English by a host of authors, including western scholars for the insight it affords into ancient Tamil culture. Consider the following poem.

*īṇru purantarudal eṇtalaik kaḍaṇē;  
cāṇrōṇ ākkudal tандаikkuk kaḍaṇē;  
vēlvaḍittuk koḍuttal kollarkuk kaḍaṇē;  
naṇṇaḍai nalgai vēndaṇkuk kaḍaṇē;  
oḷiruvāḷ aruṇcamam murukkik  
kaḷiṇerindu peyardal kāḷaikkuk kaḍaṇē.  
(Poṇmuḍiyār, PNU. 312)*

The poetess Poṇmuḍiyār apparently takes much pride in listing out the befitting roles of everyone such as mother, father, blacksmith, king and finally youth in the making of a warrior-son for defending and protecting his country.

In the translation of Kamil V. Zvelebil (1974: 47), the proud mother states:

It is my duty  
to give birth and growth.  
The father's duty is  
to make him 'wise'.  
The duty of the smith  
to hand a shapely spear.  
The duty of the king  
to be his guide in fight.

To force his way  
 into the fray  
 with his glittering sword  
 and kill the elephants  
 and then return  
 is my young son's duty.

The above quoted Tamil poem, in the words of A.K. Ramanujan has come out with different form, tone and diction (1985: 185). The proud mother pronounces:

To bring forth and rear a son is my duty.  
 To make him noble is the father's.  
 To make spears for him is the blacksmith's.  
 To show him good ways is the king's.

And to bear  
 a bright sword and do battle,  
 to butcher enemy elephants,  
 and come back:  
 that is the young man's duty.

The same poem in the lucid words of George L. Hart (1999: 180), however, gets rendered quite differently. Though the translator exactly interprets the Tamil term *cāṇrōṇ* as 'a noble (man)' in English like Ramanujan, he renders the poem in a different way as compared with latter's as well as Kamil Zvelebil's. See the transcreation of the poem below:

It is my duty to bear him and to raise him. It is  
 his father's duty to make him into a noble man. It is  
 the duty of the blacksmith to forge and give him a spear.  
 It is the king's duty to show him how to behave rightly  
 and the duty of a young man is to fight  
 indomitably with his shining sword, kill elephants,  
 and come back home.

The term *cāṇṛōṇ* occurring in the second line (of the SL) is a fascinating one, providing ample liberty for different understandings, meanings and thereby different interpretations. While Zvelebil translates it as ‘a wise (man)’, Ramanujan and Hart have rendered it as ‘a noble’ and ‘noble man’ respectively. In my opinion, all of them seem to be a little away from its original, contextual meaning and perfect interpretation. First of all, in the very first line of the poem “*īṇṛu purāntarudal eṇṭalaik kaḍaṇē*”, the last phrase “*eṇṭalaik kaḍaṇē*” has been simply translated as ‘my duty’ instead of ‘my foremost duty’ (the adjective ‘*ṭalai*’ means first, primary, chief etc.) by all the scholars.

It is to be kept in mind that any woman naturally does have numerous duties to perform in her familial life. Rearing a warrior, a gallant, valiant and chivalrous son, seemed to be ‘*the fore-most duty of the mothers*’ of Sangam period as stated by the poetess. She expects her husband’s (i.e. the father of her son) is to bring up the child as *cāṇṛōṇ*, ‘the warrior’ (not ‘wise’ or ‘noble’ (man) as translated by Kamil Zvelebil, A.K. Ramanujan, and George L Hart respectively cited earlier); blacksmith’s to make spears for him; the king’s to offer him a fitting job in his army; finally the duty of the ‘*kāḷai*’ (literally, ‘ox’/‘bull’ which denotes here a ‘valiant youth’) is to comeback home victorious after fighting indomitably with his shining sword, after killing wild elephants in the battlefield. In the interest of apprehending the exact or contextual meaning of the term *cāṇṛōṇ*, we should take the term *kāḷai* (appearing in the last stanza) into consideration for proper understanding. The term *kāḷai* in Tamil refers to ‘a young bull’ or ‘ox’. Here the term is rendered as a signifier for signifying ‘the chivalrous warrior’. If we consider the other interpretations such as a ‘wise (man)’ – (Zvelebil 1974: 47), a ‘noble (man)’ – (Ramanujan 1985: 185), ‘a noble man’ – (Hart 1999: 180) as rendered to the aforesaid term by the eminent

scholars, then the actual motif of the poem will be paradoxical. Why? Because, the protagonist of the poem is undoubtedly ‘the chivalrous warrior’. Only to a ‘valiant hero’, a blacksmith is expected to make spears, the king is supposed to offer a suitable position in his army, and finally who returns triumphantly from the battle field after eliminating the wild elephants can only be called as ‘*kālai*’, ‘a youthful bull’.

This can be testified and substantiated by the following poem, appearing from the same anthology *Puṛaṇāṇūru*, penned by a poetess called Kāvaṛpeṇḍu. A young girl, out of some interests in a youth, enquires his mother about her son’s whereabouts, when the latter replies with great pride:

*ciṛril narṛūṇ paṛri niṇmagaṇ  
yāṇḍuḷa ṇōveṇa viṇavudi eṇmagaṇ  
yāṇḍuḷa ṇāyiṇum aṛiyēṇ ṍrum  
pulicēṛndu pōgiya kallaḷai pōla  
īṇṛa vayiṛō yiduvē  
tōṇṛuvaṇ māḍō pōrkkaḷat tāṇē!.*  
(Kāvaṛpeṇḍu, PNU. 86)

The fine translation of the poem scripted by Ramanujan intently transcreates the content of the SL into the TL for everybody’s appreciation. It is quite evident from the Tamil poem as well as from its English rendering that a proud sentiment existed among mothers then, who were immensely delighted at the heroic valour of their sons. Consider the Tamil poem translated into English by Ramanujan (1985: 184):

You stand against the pillar  
of my hut and ask:  
Where is your son?  
I don't really know.



This womb was once  
 a lair  
 for that tiger.  
 You can see him now  
 only on battlefields.  
 (Tr.: A.K. Ramanujan, 1985: 184)

It is quite evident from the Tamil poem as well as from its English rendering that one can understand the proud sentiment of the mothers who were hugely delighted at the heroic/gallant/valiant personality of their sons. The mothers, as shown in the Sangam poems, indeed, feel proud in rearing a heroic son. The ‘mother sentiment’ does not show any affection or lenience to cowardly sons, even by whisper. An old woman again in *Pura-nāṇūru* hears a rumour that her son has died showing his back in the battlefield. She instantly becomes enraged and thunders, “If does he show his back and run away from ferocious battle, I will cut off these breasts that fed him” (“*maṇḍamark kuḍaindaṇa nāyiṇ uṇḍaveṇ/ mulaiyaṛut tiḍuveṇ yāṇ*”). Having said so, she turns over every body lying on the blood-soaked battlefield. She finally finds her son who is chopped to pieces, and feels happier than the day she had borne him! (Kāḱkaippāḍiṇiyār Nacellaiyār, *PNU*. 278). This is the predominant sense attached to men to be brave and heroic in the Sangam age.

Contrary to this specific connotation, the term *cāṇrōr* is rarely rendered to denote in general ‘noble men’ in some poems (e.g.: *PNU*. 191). When heroic excellence was the most adored merit in the characteristics of youths of Sangam age, Zvelebil (1973: 17) interprets the term *cāṇrōṇ* in a quite different way. While elaborating the meaning of the Tamil term *cāṇrōṇ*, Zvelebil makes this observation: “This (*cāṇrōṇ*) is a participial noun derived from the verb stem ‘cāl’, “to be abundant, full, suitable, filling, great, noble”, the noun ‘cāl’ means “fullness,

abundance”, ‘*cālpu*’ means “excellence, nobility” (1973: 18). So in his dictum, it means ‘a complete man’, ‘a whole man’, ‘a perfect man’. He adds further: “The world exists because noble and cultured men exist; without them the world would vanish in dust” (*Ibid.*). He elaborates it saying: “The ideal of human life was to be achieved in this life; and it was the ideal of a wise man of human proportions and with human qualities. The important fact is that this Tamil wise man, the *cāṇṟōṇ* is not an anchorite or a recluse, not an ascetic of any kind and shade, but a man of flesh and blood who should live fully his days of courtship and of married life, of fighting and love-making, rejoicing in the laughter and happiness with his children and friends and fully dedicated to his social and civic duties” (*Ibid.*, p. 17). Well, there is no second opinion that the word *cāṇṟōṇ* is ably referred to as ‘a noble man’. But we should know that the qualities and interpretations attributed to the word arguably vary from time to time.

Evidently, the age of the Sangam literature belonged to the last phase of the ‘Heroic Age’ (c. 3000 B.C.–A.D. 300). During this period, it is primarily ‘the warriors’ who actually commanded great admiration and respect of the king and the society. No doubt, the word originally referred to ‘warriors’. But in the bulk of Sangam poetry, the noun *cāṇṟōṇ* also strikingly meant, ‘the great, noble men (in the moral sense)’ too. The word *cāṇṟōṇ* is preceded by the adjective ‘*kolgai*’ in a poem of *Puranāṇūru*, possibly to mean the aforesaid qualities.

*yāṇḍu palavāga naraiyila āgudal*  
*yāṅgāgiya reṇa viṇavudir āyiṇ*  
*māṇḍayēṇ maṇaiviyoḍu makkaḷum nirambiṇar*  
*yāṇkaṇ ḍaṇaiyareṇ ilaiyarum vēndaṇum*  
*allavai ceyyāṇ kākkum adaṇṭalai*  
*āṇṟavin daḍaṅgiya koḷgaic*  
*cāṇṟōṇ palaryāṇ vāḷum ūrē.*  
 (Picirāṇḍaiyār, PNU. 191)

When someone wonders, “how come he (Picirāndaiyār) does not have gray hair though he had put up lot of years!”, the poet cites the following reasons: ‘He is so fortunate to lead the life with compatible family members; to have younger men listening to his words; the King who is always concerned for his subjects and the village full of fine human beings and great contented men’.

S.M. Ponnaiah (1997: 435), who renders the poem prosaically, has translated thus:

If you ask: “How is it that  
 Though you are many years old  
 You are without grey hairs?”  
 (Here is my answer):  
 Along with my wife of adorable qualities  
 My offspring are full of understanding.  
 Those who serve me, think the same thought  
 As I do.  
 My monarch desists from doing unrighteous actions  
 And protects (his subjects in full measure)  
 And what is more,  
 The place where I live  
 Has many great elders,  
 Principled in their mature wisdom,  
 Humility and conquest of their selves.

But the same poem, in the craftsmanship of Ramanujan (*Ibid.*, p. 161), has been *re-created* in English so strikingly with a more suitable diction, much to the liking of everyone.

If you ask me how it is  
 That I'm so full of years  
 and yet my hair is not gray,  
  
 it's because  
 my wife is virtuous,  
 my children are mature;

younger men wish  
 what I wish,  
 and the king only protects,  
 doesn't do what shouldn't be done.

Moreover, my town  
 has several noble men,  
 wise and self-possessed.

Obviously, there exist notable differences between the two Tamilologists of modern period in the perception of the poem on the whole in general, and about phrases like '*koḷgaic cāṇrōr*' in particular. In the translation of Ponnaiah, the sense of pride (of an old man) seems to be down playing its spirit. There is no rhetoric rather it sounds more like reporting. But Ramanujan strikingly adds a different tone and spirit to the poem. The poem indeed has taken different shape and shade in his personal touching. His poetry speaks authentically like a testimony. However, Ponnaiah, his counterpart, has rendered the Tamil metrical line "*āṇravindu aḍaṅgiya koḷgaic cāṇrōr*" quite literally as 'great elders, principled in their mature wisdom, humility and conquest of their selves' in English. On the other hand, as quoted above, Ramanujan has transcreated the same line so precisely and impeccably as 'noble men, wise and self-possessed'. Evidently, he has preserved the reticence and force of the source language. Thereby his transcreation has become a parallel poetry in English.

***Cāṇrōṇ* – ‘The Great Men’ or ‘Excellent Men’ (Post-Sangam Age – c. A.D. 200–600):**

While the mothers of Sangam age feel proud to have their sons skilled in warfare, the mothers in the post-Sangam period (i.e. 'Period of Ethical Literature' c. A.D. 200–600), do also have the

same sense of pride but for different reason i.e. for being ‘sagacious’ or ‘wise’. In this period, noticeably high respect was accorded to ‘the great men’ who excelled in noble acts but not in warfare. It is evident from the following *Tirukkuraḷ* 69:

*īṇra poluḍir periduvakkum taṇmagāṇaic*  
*cāṇrōṇ enakkēṭṭa tāy.*

Tiruvalluvar, the author of the great *Tirukkuraḷ* candidly puts it: “The mother who hears her son being called ‘a noble man’ or ‘an excellent person’ will rejoice more than she did at his birth”. Here the phrase ‘a noble man’ or ‘an excellent person’ evidently refers to ‘a great man who is morally excellent’ or ‘extraordinary’ (but not in warfare skills as it was felt in the Heroic age). But the above-referred couplet and the word *cāṇrōṇ* have been slightly misunderstood and hence differently translated by the Tamil scholar from England G.U. Pope (2009: 16): “When mother hears him named fulfill’d of wisdoms lore, far greater joy she feels, than when her son she bore”. In the words of C.R. Acharya (1999: 49), a multi-linguist, it is rendered: “Than the event begetting/ the happier be the mother/ when she hears extolling/ of her son by wiser”. A seer Subramaniaswami (2000: 35), when attempting to transcreate the same couplet, has rendered it thus:

When a mother hears her son heralded as a good and learned man,  
Her joy exceeds that of his joyous birth.

All these translators somehow seem to have missed the contextual meaning of the word *cāṇrōṇ* while rendering the couplet in English. When Pope renders the couplet more poetically and translates the Tamil word *cāṇrōṇ* as ‘a man of wisdom’ (Skt. *Jñānī*) in English, the native linguist Acharya has translated the

couplet too literally. Subsequently, he has translated the Tamil word plainly as ‘a wise man’ (Skt. *Buddhimān*, Tamil. *Ariñan*). The seer Subramaniaswami too has rendered the couplet poetically beautiful but uniquely and elaborately has interpreted the particular word as ‘a good and learned man’. It could have been justifiable, more meaningful and perfect in all sense, had they translated the word as ‘a noble man’ or ‘an excellent person’ of lofty ideas and actions (Skt. *Kulīnpurush* or *Śiṣṭavyakti*).

It is observed that during the post-Sangam period, the Tamil world gave scant respect to humanistic values under monarchial hegemony, thereby leading to turmoil in cultural aspects. The increasing influences of the North, particularly through the Jain monks, over the Tamil land during the post-Sangam period contributed much to the development of ‘Didactic Literature’ in Tamil. The Tamil rulers of the Heroic age such as the Cēras, Cōlas, and Pāṇḍiyas had lost their power to intruders i.e. the Kaḷabhras (of Karnataka), mainly because of their fratricidal wars against each other. As a consequence, there was a lot of disturbance in the smooth and peaceful life of the people. In an age of internal uncertainty and near chaos, the poets showed the path of virtue – how life should be conducted and what kind of moral percepts and code should govern life. So ‘a noble man’ (who is morally great) was required as the need of the hour, as the perfect character that society should emulate. It is so evident that a mother apparently feels proud on bearing ‘a wise son’ as stated in the following *Tirukkuraḷ* 69:

*īṇra poluḍiṟ periduvakkum taṇmagaṇaica*  
*cāṇṇrōṇ enakkēṭṭa tāy.*

The mother who hears her son called a wise man will rejoice more than she did at his birth.

(Tr.: Drew & Lazarus, 1989: 15)

This is the happiest feeling of the mother juxtaposed to that of the mother of Sangam poem (*PNU*. 278) stated earlier. Nevertheless, the sons in both instances are yet denoted by the same term *cāṇṇrōṇ* but with different connotations (a ‘warrior’ in the Sangam poem but a ‘wise man’ in the *Tirukkuraḷ*). Any woman in familial life certainly feels immensely happy when she bears a child. [It is so, if the offspring (especially the first one) happens to be a male child in Indian context]. It is observed elsewhere that womanhood attains wholeness/fullness only with motherhood. Woman undergoes unbearable/indescribable ‘labour pain’ while giving birth to a child. Alas, all her horrifying pains vanish at once as she (the mother) just glances at the new born child. This instantly makes her feel exultant. For the mother of post-Sangam period, the most rejoicing moment occurs at hearing her son as a ‘wise man’ (of learned-wisdom-noble qualities) of impeccable qualities. When the bygone society of Tiruvalluvar days started degenerating in individual as well as societal levels, ‘wise men of noble attributes’ were, indeed needed for its well-being and existence. Tiruvalluvar feels that only education drives the humanity in the path of righteousness. He denotes all those people of righteousness only with the term *cāṇṇrōṇ*<sup>2</sup> (“*aṟamporuḷ kaṇḍār*”, “those who know the attributes of virtue and wealth”, *TKL*. 141), (“*āṇṇra periyar*”, “august men”, *TKL*. 694) in his couplets wherever required. According to his opinion, ‘*cāṇṇrōṇ* is the man who does not commit any sort of immoral act in any situation’. Usually, no man does stomach his mother starving in hunger. Even in such worst scenario of emotional upset, the author of *Tirukkuraḷ* opines, the son should refrain from any action condemned by *cāṇṇrōṇ*, ‘the learned people’ (*TKL*. 656).

*īṇṛāḷ pacikāṇbāṇ āyīnum ceyyarka*  
*cāṇṇrōṇ paḷikkum viṇai.*

Here the term *cāṇṛōr* connotes contextually the ‘learned’. It is so because only education makes people become aware of what is good or bad/right or wrong to progress in their life. Only those people adhering to *dharma* (righteousness/virtue) handle the case of dispute without prejudice just like *tulākkōl*, ‘the rod of the balancing equal scale’ (*TKL*. 118). Only such great people do not lead an immoral life as they are very sensitive to shame. They are very much aware of the truth that adversity and prosperity do happen respectively due to the destiny of good and bad acts (*TKL*. 115). Only these great men of nobility have the magnanimous manliness of not desiring another man’s wife (*TKL*. 148). Thus, it shows how the term *cāṇṛōr* connoted in general a meaning but differently from the Sangam poems as ‘the learned’, ‘great men’, and ‘noble men’. It is in the same aforesaid sense, the term is rendered in all other post-Sangam works including the *Nālaḍiṃyār* (*NḍR*) as the shift has taken place in the culture of Tamils due to the excesses of absolutely powerful kings.

Out of all Tamil literary works, it is in *Nālaḍiṃyār* – the most popular ethical work after *Tirukkuraḷ*, scripted by Jain monks, the peculiar term *cāṇṛōr* has been quite interestingly employed in several verses<sup>3</sup> in the sense of ‘the excellent men’ (*NḍR*. 100, 133, 152, 153, 154, 180, 295, 344). It is a fact that the Jain monks were fully concerned with achieving the ‘*nirvāṇa*’<sup>4</sup>. Hence, they were least bothered about matters pertaining to physical well-being, and laid much emphasis on nurturing and maintaining the fine human qualities such as *ahimsā* (abstention from violence or harming living beings), *satya* (abstention from false speech, or maintaining honesty at all costs), *astēyā* (abstention from theft), *brahmacharya* (abstention from sexuality or maintaining celibacy) and *aparigraha* (abstention from greed for worldly possessions), (Sangave 1990: 48) for attaining the blissful state called *mōkṣa*. It



is strongly believed that Tiruvaḷḷuvar, the great Tamil philosopher too was a Jain by his allegiance, and hence he preached the importance of noble qualities to Jain seers and others. G.U. Pope (who collaborated with F.W. Ellis), the Tamil scholar-linguist from England, who rendered *Tirukkuraḷ* and *Nāḷaḍiyār* into English, does well in his endeavour of translating the term *cāṇṇrōr* or *cāṇṇavar*, and mostly uses the English phrase ‘the excellent persons’ (instead of ‘the noble persons’) to denote ‘men of noble qualities’. Let us see the following verse (1958: 69):

*narambelundu nalkūṇḍār āyiṇum cāṇṇrōr*  
*kurambelundu kurraṇkoṇ ḍērār – uraṇkavarā*  
*uḷḷameṇum nāriṇāl kaṭṭi uḷavaraiyāl*  
*ceyvar ceyarpā lavai. (NDR. 153)*

“The excellent, though emaciated and poor, do not transgress the limits of virtue and commit evil. With wisdom for the pillar, with perseverance as the band, they bind (the mind); and as long as they live they do what it behoves them to do”, thus Pope (*Ibid.*) translates the Tamil verse into English. Besides the term ‘the excellent’, he has employed some other words such as ‘the perfect men’ (*NDR.* 68, 165, 368), ‘the worthy men’ (*NDR.* 126, 151, 227, 343, 349), ‘the men replete with learning’ (*NDR.* 255), ‘the good men’ (*NDR.* 179, 298, 356, 357), ‘the learned ones’ (*NDR.* 316), etc. to interpret the same term. Out of them, only two phrases *viz.* ‘the men replete with learning’ and ‘the learned men’ convey the contextual meaning more closely in English. Let us see how the following Tamil verse is rendered into English:

*pāḍamē ōdippayaṇ teridal tēṇṇāda*  
*mūḍar muṇitakka colluṇkāl – kēḍaruṇcīrc*  
*cāṇṇrōr camalṭṭaṇar niṇpavē maṇṇavarai*  
*īṇṇāḍ kiṇappap parindu. (NDR. 316)*

“When foolish men chant their lesson, not knowing the fruit that lesson yields, but uttering words that gender wrath, ‘the learned ones’, whose fame dies not, will stand by ashamed, sorely pitying the mother that bare them” (Pope 1958: 139). Thus, Pope while rendering the exact meaning of the Tamil verse into English employs the term ‘the learned ones’ for referring to *cāṇṛōr*, the Tamil term.

The other English phrases such as ‘the perfect’, ‘the worthy’, and ‘the good’ and of course, ‘the excellent’ do not perfectly denote the contextual meaning of the SL. These phrases are all primarily adjectives which are commonly used for denoting the quality of animate and inanimate beings. While they have been applied to animate and inanimate things, there is possibility for ambiguity i.e. in what sense the adjectives qualify the noun, whether by its size or by money value or by its utility and so on. Whereas the other adjective ‘the noble’ is used mostly for referring to the fine personal qualities of human beings (such as courage, honesty, loyalty etc.) that people admire. Hence, the application of the adjective, ‘the noble’, to the noun ‘man’, evidently seems to be perfect in all senses. ‘The excellent’, the other adjective, fits well next only to ‘the noble’ to denote the fine quality of human beings.

It could be stated here that except ‘the noble men’ or ‘the excellent people’, all the other interpretations and translations of the term *cāṇṛōṇ* are, no doubt, synonyms but not the exact equivalents in terms of context. Let us see how the following Tamil verse is intended in English:

*aṅgaṇ vicumbiṇ agalnilāp pārikkum*  
*tiṅgaḷum cāṇṛōrum opparman – tiṅgaḷ*  
*maruvārūm cāṇṛōrah dārār terumandu*  
*tēyvar orumā curiṇ. (NDR. 151)*

“The moon that diffuses light through heaven's fair realms, and truly worthy men are alike: yet *that* endures a spot, while the truly ‘worthy’ endure it not; perplexed and sad they pine away if but one stain appears” (*Ibid.*, p. 68). Here the phrase ‘worthy men’ provides room for several inferences. People could be treated as worthy men by virtue of their age, education, wealth, position and so on. Unless it is clearly stated, we may not know the exact implication behind such words. So it is paramount for any translator to search and settle for ‘the suitable term’ to be found in the TL which he or she is working on.

***Cāṇrōṇ* – ‘The Great Men of Justice’ (*Cilappadigāram* – The Story of Anklet – c. A.D. 250):**

Following the didactic literature, the term *cāṇrōṇ* is next employed in *Cilappadigāram* (The earliest Tamil epic, c. A.D. 250) but in a different sense. The word appearing in the epic just echoes the same meaning as attributed to it by Tiruvalluvar in one of the couplets (*TKḶ.* 983). The couplet appearing in the chapter ‘*Cāṇrāṇmai*’ (Perfect Personality) deals with the qualities of excellent or perfect people.

*aṇbunāṇ oppuravu kaṇṇōṭṭam vāymaiyoḍu  
ainduṇcālbū ūṇriya tūṇ.*

The couplet pronounces that *cāṇrōṇ* is a person who holds the five fine qualities such as ‘love, modesty, beneficence, benignant grace and truth’ (*Ibid.*, p. 200). When Kaṇṇagi, the heroine of the *Cilappadigāram* goes along with her husband Kōvalaṇ to Madurai in search of a new life, she unfortunately loses her spouse. The King Pāṇḍiyaṇ Neḍuñceliyaṇ hastily orders his

royal guards to behead Kōvalaṇ (a rich merchant of Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṇam, the capital of then Cōḷa kingdom) assuming the latter to be the thief who has stolen his queen's anklet. Subsequently, the royal guards execute Kōvalaṇ at the outskirts of Madurai. Coming to know about the sudden and sad end to her husband, Kaṇṇagi laments in the streets of Madurai before proceeding to the royal court seeking justice. Since her spouse is eliminated cruelly for no fault of his and yet no one is standing up to question the king's atrocity, shell shocked, anguished, annoyed, she wonders:

*cāṇṇrōrum uṇḍukol? cāṇṇrōrum uṇḍukol?*  
*īṇra kuḷaviyeḍuttu vaḷark kuṛūm*  
*cāṇṇrōrum uṇḍukol? cāṇṇrōrum uṇḍukol?*  
 (Ilaṅgō Aḍigaḷ, CPM., Maduraik Kāṇḍam,  
 Ūrcūḷ Vari, Line 54)

The above stanzas have been rendered quite differently by a couple of Tamilologists, perhaps with reasons.

Are there good men in this land,  
     are there virtuous men here?  
 Are there no great men in this land  
     But only men interested in themselves  
 and the welfare of their kith and kin only?  
 (Tr.: Ka. Naa. Subramanyam, 1977: 120)

Are there good people? Are there good people  
     Here? Are there good people who nurture and  
 Fend for children born of them? Are there  
     good people here?  
 (Tr.: V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1978: 284)

.....      ....      .....      Are there good people here,  
 Are there good people who cherish and rear  
 their own children? Are there such good people here?  
 (Tr.: R. Parthasarathy, 1999: 184)

All the three scholars have invariably rendered the term *cāṇṛōr* as ‘good men’ or ‘good people’. But in my opinion, the adjective term ‘good’ does not convey the exact meaning of the Tamil word in its entirety as well as contextually here. It could have been perfect had they rendered the stanzas as: “Are there ‘great-men of justice’ or ‘noble men’ (existing) here? Are there ‘great men of justice’ or ‘noble men’ (existing) here?” instead of rendering them as “Are there ‘good people’ or ‘good men’ existing here?” Since the life of her spouse is cruelly terminated for no fault of his, and no one comes forward to help her question the unjustifiable action of the king, she furiously questions whether really ‘great men of justice’ or ‘noble people who are courageous enough’ to question the king exist there. Here, we have to corroborate the term *cāṇṛōr* that occurs in the first and third metrical lines of the second stanza with the phrases of second line to infer the actual connotation of the term. Conspicuously, the term in the contention here denotes ‘courageous men’ or ‘justices’ who are not simply interested in themselves and in the welfare of their kith and kin but are capable of questioning the ruthlessness of the king. The Jaina epic *Cilappadigāram* which emerged after the great *Tirukkuraḷ* capably demonstrates how an ordinary woman – who regards her husband as the lord greater than god – can conquer even the mighty king – who scantily regards the virtue of ruling and behaves ruthlessly in the realm of politics. Evidently here, the term *cāṇṛōr* refers to ‘the great people’ who possess all the five fine human qualities, attributed to them by the above cited *Tirukkuraḷ* but not people who excelled in warfare or men who scaled the height of wisdom (Skt. *Jñānīs*).

***Cāṅṟōr* – ‘The Saints’ or ‘Servants of the Lord’ (The Period of Bhakti Movement – c. A.D. 600–900):**

Evidently, Tamil is the only Indian classical language widely respected at the International level next to Sanskrit for obvious reasons. The *Tolkāppiyam* (the earliest Tamil grammatical work) and the Sangam anthologies (*Eṭṭuttogai* and *Pattuppāṭṭu*) are the main sources and decisive factors behind the envious position of Tamil at the International forum. Besides these classical anthologies, the soul-stirring hymns of Tamil viz. *Tiruvāsagam*, *Tēvāram* (Śaiva Canons) and *Nālāyira Divyaṭ Prabandham* (Vaishṇava Canons) have immensely contributed to the grand status of Tamil. It is a fact that no other language, either national or international, has such enormous amount of hymns or devotional literature as the Tamil language possesses.

In historical times, the Tamil land was ruled mainly by the Kings from three dynasties such as Cēra–Cōḷa–Pāṇḍiya. Its sizeable regions were also governed then by kings like Pallavas and Seven Chieftains called as “*Kaḍai Ēḷu Vaḷḷalgaḷ*” (“The Last Seven Great Donors”) such as Vaiyāvi Kōpperum Pēgan, Vēḷ Pāri, Malaiyaṇ Tirumuḍik Kāri, Āy Aṇḍiraṇ, Adiyamāṇ Neḍumāṇ Añci, Kaṇḍīrak Kōpperum Naḷḷi, and Valvil Ōri. While expressing the uniqueness of the four major regions of the bygone era of Tamil Nadu, the following popular Tamil sayings emphasize:

*Cēra-nāḍu vēḷam uḍaittu*

[*Cēra* country has elephants (in abundance)]

*Pāṇḍiya-nāḍu muttu uḍaittu*

[*Pāṇḍiya* country has pearls (in abundance)]

*Cōḷa-nāḍu cōru uḍaittu*

[*Cōḷa* country has rice/food (in abundance)]

*Toṇḍai-nāḍu cāṇṛōr uḍaittu*

[*Toṇḍai* country has saints (in plenty)]

The abovementioned popular phrases conspicuously divulge some fascinating facts of the ancient Tamil Nadu. *Cēra-nāḍu*, the present Kerala, is known for its countless elephants. *Pāṇḍiya-nāḍu* consists of Tūttukkuḍi (Tuticorin), a seaport city is known for its treasured pearls. *Cōḷa-nāḍu*, the most fertile region of the Kāviri delta, is well-known for its colossal production of rice. *Toṇḍai-nāḍu* (lit. Ancient country) is famous for numerous pious ‘Slaves of the Lords’ viz. Śiva and Viṣṇu. It is said that *Toṇḍai-nāḍu* is slightly corrupted or derived version of *Toṇḍar-nāḍu*, the country of ‘the Slaves of the Lord’. It is interesting to know that it is only the *Toṇḍai-nāḍu* which earned the due reputation for possessing saints in plenty whereas the other countries had earned the name of fame respectively for possessing the non-human being entities such as elephants, pearls and rice in abundance. It needs to be mentioned here that *Toṇḍai-nāḍu* was the country which covered the entire northern part of Tamil Nadu (presently from Mahābalipuram to Poṇṇāḍi – a small village located at 6 kms. from Tiruttaṇi, the town situated at the northern border of Tamil Nadu) and also some regions of the southern part of Andhra Pradesh (presently from Bellāri to Veṅkaṭa Narasimha Rājuvāri Pēṭṭa, a tiny village located at 7 kms. from Tiruttaṇi) which was once ruled by Pallavas (c. A.D. 600–900). Tirupati and Śrī Kāḷahasti – the two holy cities of present day Andhra Pradesh, in fact, had been an integral part of the aforesaid region. Kāñcipuram, the holy city presently known for its world famous silk *sarees*, served as the capital city during

the Pallavas reign. Besides these holy cities, *Toṇḍai-nāḍu* consisted of numerous great religious places such as Mahābali-puram, Tirukkaḷukkuṇṇam, Śrī Perumpudūr, Tirukkōvilūr, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, Tiruniṇṇavūr, Tirumaḷisai, Kuṇṇattūr, Tiruvorriyūr, Mailāpūr, Tiruvallikkēṇi, Tiruvaḷḷūr, Tiruvālaṅkāḍu, Tiruttaṇi, Śōliṅgar, etc. In ancient times, Kāñcipuram served as the ancient citadel of Jainism and also as a great centre imparting high knowledge like Nālanda where a University was functioning and providing ample scope for the emergence of various philosophies and tenets. And enviably, it was, in fact, in this region, the great *Nāyaṇmārs* (Śaiva saints) such as Kaṇṇappa Nāyaṇār (Śrī Kāḷa-hasti), Tirukkuṛipput Toṇḍar Nāyaṇār (Kāñcipuram), Muruga Nāyaṇār (Tiruppugalur), Kaliya Nāyaṇār (Tiruvorriyūr), Aiya-ḍigaḷ Kāḍavarkōṇ Nāyaṇār (Kāñcipuram), Vāyilār Nāyaṇār (Mailāpūr), Kaḷarśiṅga Nāyaṇār (Kāñcipuram), Pūsalār Nāyaṇār (Tiruniṇṇavūr), Sēkkiḷār (Kuṇṇattūr), and also *Ālvārs* (Vaishṇava saints) such as Pēy Ālvār (Mailāpūr), Bhūdāma Ālvār (Mahābali-puram), Poygai Ālvār (Kāñcipuram), Tirumaḷisai Ālvār (Tirumaḷisai), and of course, the great Universal philosopher Tiruvaḷḷuvar (Mailāpūr) and the great prophet Rāmānujachārya (Śrī Perumpudūr), the founder of Śrī Vaishṇavism *et al.* were born and flourished. It is to be noted here that the woman Śaiva saint-poet Puṇitavati *alias* Kāraikkāl Ammaiṇār did come all the way from Kāraikkāl, a seaport city of the erstwhile Cōḷa kingdom only to attain *mukti* in the holy place called Tiruvālaṅkāḍu (near Arakkōṇam town in North Arcot District) where the Lord Śiva performs His cosmic dance. So naturally due to its great progenies and to their holiness and wisdom, the Pallava kingdom virtually had been hailed as the country contains of *cāṇṇrōr* (Saints/Slaves of the Lord) in great numbers.

With the emergence of ‘The Bhakti Movement’ (c. A.D. 600–900), the term *cāṇṇrōr* gets attached to the word ‘*camayam*’



(religion) and formed the compound ‘*camayac cāṇṛōr*’ that commonly refers to the religious and pious people in general irrespective of their denominations or sects. Subsequently, the term comes to be attached to revered saints like Tāyumāṇava Swāmi (1604–1661), Rāmaliṅga Swāmi (popularly known as *Vaḍalūr Vaḷḷalār*, 1823–1874), and other holy men who by and large fulfill the conditions prescribed for one to be a *cāṇṛōn*. The term comes to be used as an honorific title in modern times and people like Āṟumuga Nāvalar, Maṟaimalai Aḍigaḷ, Tiru. Vi. Kalyāṇasundaraṇār, Kirubānanda Vāriyār and so on are identified as ‘*caivac cāṇṛōr*’ (Savants of Śaivism). It may be stated that the term *cāṇṛōr* here does not refer to the savants for any expertise in war or noble qualities but for their ‘wholesome piety’ or ‘saintly nature’. These revered people indeed led an exemplary life in the past by their conviction and conduct, and so naturally they have become highly respected socio-religious leaders to the masses of modern period.

***Cāṇṛōr* – ‘The Excellent Poets of Sangam Age’ (Kamba Rāmāyaṇam c. A.D. 1200):**

Next to *Cilappadigāram*, we come across the rendering of the term *cāṇṛōr* in *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam* composed by Kambaṇ (c. A.D. 1180–1250), the poet of Tamil literature par-excellence. The Tamil literati aptly adore the poet as the ‘Poet-Emperor’ (‘*kaviccakravarti*’), ‘Great Learned’ (‘*kalviyir periyaṇ*’) and so on. Apparently, the poets of the ancient Sangam works have much impressed the great poet Kambaṇ, the exceptional poet of the medieval period. By paying a grand tribute to those Sangam poets, the poet-emperor duly acknowledges them with the recurring term *cāṇṛōr* in his magnum opus. Let us comprehend the following poem that portrays the aforesaid term.

*puviyīṇuk kaṇiya yāṇra poruḷtandu pulattīrṛāgi*  
*aviyagat turaigaḷ tāṅgi aintiṇai neṛiyaḷāvic*  
*caviyurāt teḷindu taṇṇen roḷukkam taḷuvic cāṇrōr*  
*kaviyeṇak kiḍanda godāvariyaṇai vīrar kaṇḍar.*  
 (KRM., *Āraṇya Kāṇḍam*, *Sūrpṇaṅgaip Paḍalam* 1)

Perhaps, Kambaṇ is the only poet, indeed, who employs the term *cāṇrōr* in the sense of ‘the excellent poets of the Sangam works’. This is how the poet-emperor Kambaṇ adds a diamond to the jeweled cap i.e. term *cāṇrōr* in his times. The translation of the aforesaid poem by P.S. Sundaram (1991: 39) is as follows:

They saw the river Gōdāvari<sup>5</sup>  
 spread, an ornament to the earth,  
 yielding rare goods fit for the land,  
 with many ports over the five tracts<sup>6</sup>,  
 clear, cool and regulated  
 like the poetry of good men (*cāṇrōr*).<sup>7</sup>  
 (Tr. P.S. Sundaram, 1991: 39)  
 (N.B.: The parenthesis is added by the author)

The term *cāṇrōr*, however, is misinterpreted as ‘good men’ by a scholar Sundaram as he somehow misreads its connoted reference. His interpretation i.e. ‘good men’ for the term *cāṇrōr* in turn exactly means ‘*nallōr*’/‘*nallavargaḷ*’ in Tamil which is a misplaced connotation contextually. Evidently, there exists no corroboration or compatibility between the terms ‘the poetry’ and ‘good men’ as he interprets the phrase “*cāṇrōr kavi*” as “the poetry of good men”. They are not supportive to each other, and apparently they stand apart. It could have been better, had the translator rendered the phrase ‘*cāṇrōr kavi*’ as ‘the lyric of excellent poets’.

***Cāṇṛōr* – ‘The Great Tamils for Grand Tamil’ (20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Century):**

The same term *cāṇṛōr*, however, in the present context, refers to something completely different. Till the modern period, it has referred to male persons only. In recent times, the term *cāṇṛōr* has come to refer to ‘the distinguished Tamil lovers’ of both genders, who are learned, holding political power, dignified posts, a sizeable wealth, good character etc. They are addressed as ‘*Tamiḷc Cāṇṛōr*’ (The Great Tamils). As we are aware of the fact that during the last three decades, ‘the English Convent Schools’ emerged like anthills all over India, even in remote country side. Naturally, the Tamil Dignitaries/Savants are afraid of the spurt of the English Convent Schools that they will virtually ruin the very existence and progress of Tamil language in its own land. So they founded a forum called ‘*Tamiḷc Cāṇṛōr Pēravai*’<sup>8</sup> (Forum of Tamil Dignitaries) in the year 1992. This forum vehemently advocates the agenda that Tamil should be the medium of instruction in all schools ranging from the private convent to matriculation schools and also in all government aided public schools besides the state owned schools. Highlighting the significance of education through the Tamil medium, numerous events, seminars and rallies were held at various places especially in Chennai. On 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1999, one hundred well-wishers of Tamil progress under the banner of ‘*Tamiḷc Cāṇṛōr Pēravai*’ sat on hunger strike till death. Under the leadership of Professor Tamiḷaṇṇal (R. Periya Karuppaṇ, former Professor and Head, Department of Tamil Studies, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu), the forum fought tooth and nail for the survival of Tamil in Tamil Nadu. There were a host of well-wishers for Tamil from political

parties, entrepreneurs from industries, dignitaries retired from the government services, esteemed educationists-Tamil professors-advocates *et al.* participated for the cause of Tamil. It is interesting to know that all these V.I.Ps are referred to with the single phrase “*Tamīlc Cāṇṟōr*” (“Tamil Dignitaries”) irrespective of their profession, age and gender. Men from all walks of life, irrespective of profession, gender, or age joined the forum and took part in all its activities related to maintaining the supremacy of mother tongue i.e. Tamil in all business activities. Obviously, the meaning of the term *cāṇṟōr* in the above phrase is neither ‘wise men’ nor ‘noble men’ but simply ‘the distinguished people’ dedicated to the welfare of the Tamil language who hold some prominent position in the society. So it is evident that the meaning of word *cāṇṟōr* has varied according to the socio-cultural-political implications in the given period, as the meaning of many such words do.

The discussion may be concluded here with the remarks of Ramanujan as he observed elsewhere (2006: 230–31) in an article “On translating a Tamil poem”:

The translation must not only represent, but *re-present*, the original. One walks a tightrope between the To-language and the From-language, with a sense of double loyalty. A translator is an ‘artist on oath’. Sometimes one may succeed only in *re-presenting* a poem, not in closely representing it. [...] If the representation in another language is not close enough, but still succeeds in ‘carrying’ the poem in some sense, we will have two poems instead of one.

That is why, evidently, we have several interpretations to a term like *cāṇṟōr* in the transcreation of poetry. The term *cāṇṟōr*, though had specifically meant ‘warriors’, yet not often referred

to 'the noble men' or 'the men of virtues' in Sangam age. The same term apparently denoted 'noble people' or 'excellent men' who had possessed 'the five fine human qualities' such as love, modesty, beneficence, benignant grace and truth in the post-Sangam period that wholly represents the Jain philosophy on human values. And yet, it also denoted 'the great saints' in the period of Bhakti Movement and 'the pious people' in modern period. Presently the term is used to refer to any person, a man or woman, youth or aged person who is known for his/her commitment to Tamil language's welfare, holding some position either by power, knowledge, wealth, or character etc., in the society.

So it is paramount that the task of the translator is to extract the essential sense of the SL and *re-create* or *re-present* it in the TL. At the end, it is only the translator who knows what to add and what to remove to *re-create* the essential spirit and soul of the original, and he or she has got the right to do that too. But it is very important for the translator to keep in mind the actual contextual meaning of any word or phrase from the SL while attempting to *re-present* it in another language. No translation has ever entirely satisfied its author, or the readers. The exactness of transcreation or *re-presentation* could be more or less perfect according to the circumstances, and also with the level of mastery of both the SL and the TL by the translator.

---

## Notes

- \* This essay is a revised version of my paper published with the same title in the *JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF ASIAN STUDIES*, Vol. XXII No. 2, Institute of Asian Studies, Chemman-cherry, Chennai – 600 119, March 2005, pp. 63–80.
1. *Cāṇṛāṇmai* (Sublimity/Virtue/Goodness): *TKḶ*. 981, 989, 990.
  2. *Cāṇṛōr*: *TKḶ*. 115, 118, 148, 197, 299, 328, 458, 656, 657, 802, 840, 922, 923, 982, 985, 1014, 1078.
  3. *Nāḷaḷiyār*: Verses 68, 100, 126, 133, 151-154, 165, 179, 190, 227, 255, 290, 295, 298, 316, 343, 344, 349, 356, 357, 368.
  4. *Nirvāṇa* means release from the *karmic* bondage. When an enlightened human, such as an *Arhat* or *Tirthankara*, extinguishes his remaining *aghatiya karmas* and thus ends his worldly existence, it is called *nirvāṇa*. Technically, the death of an *Arhat* is called *nirvāṇa*, as he ends his worldly existence and attained liberation. *Mōkṣa* (liberation) follows *nirvāṇa*. However, the terms *mōkṣa* and *nirvāṇa* are often used interchangeably in the Jain texts. An *Arhat* becomes a *siddha*, the liberated one, after attaining *nirvāṇa*. (For more details see: Jaini, Padmanabh, 2000, ‘Moksa and Nirvana are synonyms in Jainism’, in *Collected Papers on Jaina Studies*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, p. 168, Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moksha\\_\(Jainism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moksha_(Jainism)), Accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2015).
  5. Gōḍāvari is a perennial river of present Andhra Pradesh like the Kāviri river of Karnataka State.
  6. The five tracts/regions are *kuṛiñci* (mountain region), *mullai* (forest region), *marudam* (fertile land region), *neydal* (seashore region) and *pālai* (uncultivable or barren-land region).
  7. The Prodigious or Excellent Poets of Sangam works.
  8. *Tamiḷc Cāṇṛōr Pēravai*, No. 26, Sardar Patel Road, Adaiyar, Chennai – 600 020, Phone: 044- 24919353.



## II

### **Ethical Principles in Sangam Culture\***

Tamil is one of the most accomplished and ancient among the living languages of the world. So the Union Government of India duly recognized it as a classical language on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2004. It is, indeed, a matter of honour that deserves celebration. *Tolkāppiyam* (c. 200–100 B.C.), the earliest Tamil grammatical work and *Pattuppāṭṭu* and *Eṭṭutogai*, the other acclaimed Sangam Literary works (c. 100 B.C.–A.D. 250), in fact, have laid the foundation for its delayed but due recognition of its classical status. These works came up during the “Heroic Age” (c. 3000 B.C.–A.D. 300) when kingdoms emerged in Tamil Nadu at the expense of traditional tribal chieftains and lords. Themes of “Love and War” – the predominant subject matters of the ancient Tamil poetry formed the two eyes of the corpus – seemingly giving importance to the very notions of worldly life however with very much regard for the higher aims of life. The moral behaviours upheld and duties performed by man/woman at individual, familial and social level have all been described by poets so aesthetically in the aforesaid Sangam poems. This paper aims at analyzing the ethical principles and duties advocated by the poets of the erstwhile era and the responses of the ancient Tamils to their calling.



In the heroic age, ostensibly, the king was hailed as the lord of the land. In the quest of either safeguarding the people from the onslaught of the enemy kings or for establishing and expanding the boundaries of their territory, kings waged numerous battles/wars in ancient times. Arguably, the fearing nature and dominating sense of men are the two basic factors that forced wars in those heroic times. In the heroic period, people unanimously hailed the brave men who excelled in warfare skills as their lord. It is a trend wherein the Sangam poets usually depict both the situations viz. ‘*akam*’ (pronounced *aham*) and ‘*puṛam*’ more closely to the realism than empty imaginings. The poets seem to have enjoyed good respect and regards from the kings as well as the common folk. They often serve as a link/bridge/channel between kings and the public. Simultaneously, they also perform the duty of journalists socially committed; serve as an institution of public relations propagating the plans/project/schemes of kings among the people. These ancient poets virtually term the ethical conduct and duties of the kings and the citizens by the Tamil word “*aṛam*”.

### **Definition of *Aṛam* (Virtue):**

The term ‘*aṛam*’ refers to divergent connotations such as ‘refined behaviour’, ‘fine conduct’, ‘good habits’, ‘fine customs’, ‘decent culture’ and ‘delightful justice’. It denotes more or less the meaning of the virtual Sanskrit term ‘*dharma*’ which generally means ‘morals’ or ‘ethics’ in English, i.e. ‘right way of living and path of righteousness’. Whatever noble behaviours/fine customs and individual/social duties are upheld and performed by men in the interest of familial and social life can be termed as ‘*aṛam*’. In a nutshell, it simply means ‘ethical principle’ or ‘code of conduct’ or ‘virtue’. Normally, noble behavi-

ours and fine duties of an individual, in course of time, get accepted by one and all. Eventually, they earn social recognition and thereby the status of permanence. The once dignified culture of an individual later becomes “ethical principle of society” when it duly gets legitimized and sanctified by common men in due course of time.

### **Being Truthful – An Ethical Conduct:**

Out of all qualities, speaking truth or uttering faultless words is hailed as a universal virtuous conduct since ages. Especially, people of the Sangam age highly hail ‘*pīlaiyā naṇmolī*’ (‘faultless words’), (*Narriṇai* (*NRI*) 10) as a superior ethical trait. They usually behave with “*oṇru molindu aḍaṅgiya koḷgai*” (“uttering truth and controlling senses”), (*Paḍirrupattu* (*PPU*), 15). They really care for ethical codes by all means just to live a flawless life. Never have they consciously deviated from leading an honest life. The erstwhile society willfully maintains the truthful existence devoid of falsehood while elegantly upholding the valiant/chivalrous life. It sincerely believes that living graciously a life of virtue will bring forth everlasting reputation. “In this world that does not last forever, those who sought to last forever, died leaving their fame to last” – (Peruntalaic Cāṭṭaṇār, *PNU*. 165). Needless to say, they are “the people [...] afraid of what others fear, will give up their lives for fame, but will not accept fame if it comes with dishonour, even if they were to gain the world” – (Kaḍalu! Māynda Iḷamperuvalūdi, *PNU*. 182). They wish to lead the life of heroism at any cost. When a king Talaiyā-laṅkāṇattuc Ceruveṇṇra Neḍuñceḷiyaṇ fears losing the battle, he unequivocally declares, “If I do not attack those enraged kings in harsh battles and ruin their drums. [...] Let the poets with great skill [...] sing not about it (his country)”, (*PNU*. 72). It is their

strong belief that in the higher world there is a place only for those who lived in this earth with soaring fame (Mōcikīraṇār, *PNU*. 50). In short, the Sangam people maintain the qualities of valour and uprightness as their two eyes just to excel in worldly as well as in heavenly life.

There exists a perfect understanding among the people of Sangam period on the subjects such as the worldly and heavenly lives. They do believe in the existence of celestial life after their death. As a matter of faith, they consider anyone doing good deeds in the present life surely will have the delightful existence in the next birth. To this effect, they endorse the attribute of being benevolent as a key factor. But they do not expect any sort of returns while being benevolent. The poet Paraṇar rightly eulogizes the generosity of the chieftain Pēgaṇ, one of the “*Kaḍai Ēlu Vaḷḷalgaḷ*” (“The Last Seven Great Donors”) of ancient Tamil Nadu, as “he does not give anything considering that it is good for the next birth but is greatly generous, and does it because it is virtuous to give, when he sees the poverty of others”, (*PNU*. 141).

In a similar fashion, a poet Ēṇiccēri Muḍamōciyār candidly speaks about the same noble trait of Āy, another great donor as follows: “Āy is not like a merchant with fair prices who thinks that the good done in this birth will help the next one. His generosity is because of other noblemen before him who followed the right path!”, (*PNU*. 134). These aforesaid passages evidently do underline the code of virtuous conduct sincerely adhered to by the rulers of erstwhile Tamil Nadu. The ancient Tamils do not aspire for any dividends in return while doing good things to others but simply they uphold it as a way of their life.

### **Living the Family Life – A Fine Ethical Conduct:**

The Tamil word “*āram*” (ethical principle), as a suffix, is employed simultaneously to denote ‘*illāram*’, ‘family life’, and ‘*turavāram*’, ‘ascetic life’. But different sets of ethical tenets are advocated and practiced in the realms of family life and ascetic life. Out of all the ethical deeds, family life is hailed as the most sought after and meaningful by Indians. Of course, humans are born solo but they do not live in solitude. While reaching adulthood, a man essentially needs a woman and vice versa. As we know, family life (wherein man and woman live with mutual understanding together as husband and wife) is duly recognized as the ever best system fashioned for man-kind to endure and excel well in all spheres. It is essentially a pre-requisite and a cardinal point for any human society. Slowly but steadily getting away from the obligations of family life is nothing but pious life. *Leading family life is appreciated and advocated in the Sangam poems. The other life is not ever recommended.* As family life is supposed to be built on ‘compassion’ and ‘love’, it is aptly denoted as ‘*anbuṟu kāmam*’ (affectionate/kind/caring love), (NRI. 389) in Tamil. This affectionate/concerned love essentially needs to be sanctified by society. So every human society frames a set of norms and regulations according to its own ethos. Indian marriage cum family life system, wherein a man and a woman are supposed to live together forever after their marriage, is really revered by foreigners especially by the Europeans.

The ancient Tamil society pertinently hails the ‘the family life system’ as the most essential social scheme designed for human beings. In fact, the aspects of ‘*kaḷavu*’ (clandestine love) and ‘*karpu*’ (married life) essayed aesthetically in the Sangam *akam* poems highlight the greatness of human love and its consummation. Needless to say, the human beings’ clandestine

love effectively matures well only in the married life. *Karpu* alone is entitled to beget children. Only in this system, man and woman as parents rear the children with love, take care of their problems with concern and ensure their progress in all spheres with commitment. Further, it is only the traditional family life which protects well the aged parents, entertains guests with great hospitality and feeds beggars. In a way, this system functions as the main handhold of society like a lever to the wheel of a chariot.

In married life, there may be a dearth of materials but certainly no place for unkindness. It is only in family life normally ‘man and woman live with love, embrace each other and tear and share garments’, (*KLT*. 18). *In this realm, man is not a central or pivotal figure but the woman.* The married woman becomes ‘*maṇaikku viḷakku*’ (‘light to the family/home’), (*Aiyūr Muḍavaṇṇār*, *PNU*. 314, & *Pēyaṇṇār*, *AKU*. 405); ‘*kuḍikku viḷakku*’ (‘light to the clan/family’), (*Madurai Marudaṇḍ Ilanāgaṇṇār*, *ANU*. 184) since she illuminates her home with her grace. Wives feel really happy when their husbands acknowledge and appreciate the fine taste of the food that is cooked and served by them, (*Kūḍalūr Kilār*, *KRT*. 167). When women who manage the family are duly admired with some fine epithets highlighting their good qualities, their men are just stated as their husbands. For example, “*maṇaikku viḷakkāgiya vāṇudal kaṇavaṇ*”, (lit. “The husband of a woman with a bright forehead, who is a light to the home”), (*Aiyūr Muḍavaṇṇār*, *PNU*. 314), “*ceyirtūr kaṇpiṇ cēliḷai kaṇava(ṇ)*”, (lit. “The husband to a woman of faultless purity”), (*Irumbiḍarttalaiyār*, *PNU*. 3: 6), “*pāvaiyaṇṇa nallōḷ kaṇavaṇ*”, (lit. “The husband to a fine woman as beautiful as a doll”), (*Kabilar*, *PPU*. 61: 4), “*cēṇāru naṇunudal cēliḷai kaṇava(ṇ)*”, (lit. “The husband to a lady with fragrant even afar, wearing glowing jewels and a fine forehead”), (*Kabilar*, *PPU*. 65: 10),

“*vaṇḍār kūṇḍal oṇṭoḍi kaṇava(ṇ)*”, (lit. “The husband of a woman who bears bee swarming fragrant hairs and bright bangles”), (Peruṅkuṇṇūr Kīlār, *PPU*. 90: 50). Thus, evidently in the scheme of Tamil society, woman is rightly identified and addressed as the principal figure of home making. It is true that since ages women are the personae who earnestly shoulder the responsibility of managing their homes. Their counterparts are only supporting their cause by providing the required money or materials or wealth. The wedded life throws various challenges to man, makes him become mature and perfect in due course of time. So naturally living the family life is highly respected and praised throughout India.

Ascetic life is juxtaposed to the domestic life. This is impractical for ordinary men to adhere to. *The Sangam poets, who hail the life of love and war, never recommend the life of hermits to Tamils.* As such, there is no literary evidence in the Sangam poems which refers to someone embracing the life of renunciation. Apparently, *asceticism is not the way of Tamil culture.* Evidently, the Sangam corpus has advocated/addressed certain ethics for mankind to live the worldly life for the fullest happiness.

### **Extramarital Relationship – An Immoral Trait:**

Man has the habit of ‘keeping’ or ‘maintaining extramarital relationship’ with woman since evolution. The adulterous or illicit relationship is a universal phenomenon. Though essayed aesthetically in the *marudam* (sulking over the unfaithfulness of husband) poems of Sangam classics but never it is welcomed or appreciated by anyone. Some men who live in the region of fertile lands ‘keep’ other women deceptively for sexual pleasure and become disloyal to their wives. Thereupon, men of nobility

candidly condemn it. They rebuke the unfaithful husbands. Not that adultery affects an individual's pride/dignity alone but damages more the reputation of his entire family members. Thereby, the ethos of family system is shattered; the societal virtue is worn out. Though not always for monetary benefits the extramarital relationship (which sometimes ends in prostitution) exists in society yet the Sangam poets censure it and reprimand the disloyal husbands out-rightly for its negative consequences. Poets do not spare even the kings when they become unfaithful to their wives. The chieftain Pēgaṇ, mentioned elsewhere, known for his strange generosity<sup>1</sup>, starts living with another woman leaving his wife Kaṇṇagi in distress. Coming to know about his unfaithfulness to his wife, poets such as Paraṇar, Kabilar, Aricil Kiḷār, and Peruṅkuṇṇūr Kiḷār voice their concern and disapproval, though separately but they all join on one issue. They bring the pathetic situation of his wife to his notice in order to make him upright. "Who is that pitiable woman unable to hold back her flowing tears, her breasts wet, and she cried constantly, sounding like a sad flute", (Kabilar, *PNU*. 143), "It is cruel that you don't show any compassion to a young woman in great grief", (Paraṇar, *PNU*. 144); "The gift I beg from you is that you mount your tall chariot strung with bells and remove the anguish of your wife. Please show compassion!", (Paraṇar, *PNU*. 145); "We do not want your wealth or precious jewels. May that stay with you! If you want to give me a gift, then please hitch your fast horses to your tall chariot, and go to your young wife wearing fine jewels, in great despair, wasting away through your cruelty", (Aricil Kiḷār, *PNU*. 146); "Grant me the gift of you going to your wife today, the beautiful dark woman, who yesterday, stood alone in despair", (Peruṅkuṇṇūr Kiḷār, *PNU*. 147), thus they all express their grief to the great Pēgaṇ in unison. Though it is a delicate, personal matter of the chieftain

and his wife yet these poets do not hesitate to advise and admonish him. They are not even worried about facing the possible wrath of the chieftain. As these great poets are really concerned for the blissful family life, the societal virtue, they voluntarily speak their heart only to see him and his wife united. This is one of the typical characteristics of the bards who uphold the ethics of noble men in every spirit.

### **Drinking of *Kaḷ* (Toddy) – A Justifiable Habit:**

Drinking of '*kaḷ*' (toddy, a variety of country liquor), is part of Tamils' food culture since time immemorial. Unhealthy liquor or spurious alcohol has replaced the *kaḷ* for a quite long time. Needless to say, the bad habit becoming addiction after sometime is ruining lakhs and lakhs of individuals, numerous families, and ethos of Indian society beyond one's perception. So thoughtful individuals as well as most Indian State governments are now-a-days severely censuring the consumption of liquor, alcohol, whisky, brandy etc. for their negative consequences. However, *the habit of consuming kaḷ is not condemned in the Sangam age*. Rather it has earned social and royal recognition. It is said that in the houses of small towns comprising a few settlements, liquor is brewed for consumption, (Iḷavēṭṭaṇār, *PNU*. 329: 1). Tamil kings often treat poets, bards and minstrels serving them with *kaḷ*, (Paraṇar, *PPU*. 43), and "*ūṇ tuvai aḍicil*" (rice cooked with mutton i.e. *Biryani* in Persian), (Paraṇar, *PPU*. 45). This is strikingly vouched also in the following poem<sup>2</sup> (*PNU*. 235) sung by the poetess Avvaiyār. She indeed laments as follows when the chieftain Adiyamāṇ, her patron and close friend, expires:

If he had a little toddy, he would give it to us.  
Not any longer. If he had abundant toddy, he would



give it to us and happily drink the leftover as we sang to him. Not any longer. If he had a little rice, he would set it on many dishes. Not any longer.

If he had heaps of rice, he would set it out on many dishes. Not any longer. Whenever he came upon bones full of meat, he would give it to us. Not any longer. Whenever arrows and lances crossed the battlefield, he stood there.

Not any longer. With his hands with orange fragrance, he would stroke my hair with its stench of meat. Not any longer.

(Avvaiyār, *PNU*. 235: 1–9, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>3</sup>

From the above poem, it is clear that not only men but women also did consume *kaḷ*, the country liquor in ancient times. It may be mentioned here that kings usually enjoy the life every day as women serve fragrant and cool wine brought in fine ships by the Greeks, pouring from finely made golden pitchers (Madurai Kaṇakkāyaṇār Magaṇār Nakkīraṇār, *PNU*. 56). Not only they have enjoyed the life of merry-making, but offer the same to their subjects too. They serve *kaḷ* along with mutton rice to their warriors during or after the war especially after the victory. So *consuming toddy and eating mutton food are not censured as unethical deeds in those days*. Evidently, it is the food culture of the day honoured by everyone. But this has become a subject of condemnation in the post-Sangam period i.e. the period of ‘Didactic Literature’ (c. A.D. 300–600).

### **Ethical Principles in *Puṇam* (Exterior) Life:**

Undisputedly the king is the ultimate power house or the crown of the patriarchal Sangam society. A king, as per the Vedic *sāstras*<sup>4</sup>, is supposed to uphold five kinds of *dharma*s such as his

*kula dharma* (the observance peculiar to his dynasty/clan), *dēsa dharma* (duty towards (his) country), *mata dharma* (duty towards religion), *jana dharma* (duty towards (his) people), and *āpad dharma* (duty at the times of emergency/calamity). In the quest of adhering to the aforesaid *dharmas*, the king has to carry out battles/wars at times. Though waging wars is a matter of military sphere yet they ought to be conducted as per certain norms or principles laid down thereof.

In fact, ethical principles are supposedly adhered to in *puṛam* (exterior) life more than that of *akam* (interior) sphere. While invading another country or waging wars or annexing a neighbouring country, certain norms are upheld by the erstwhile Tamil kings. The ancient Tamils then witness “the kings with righteousness who fought a valiant war”, (Kaḷāttalaiyār, *PNU*. 62: 7)<sup>5</sup>. The kings do always inform their counterparts rightly about their intended war against them through a proper missionary. They earnestly advise cows, Brahmins, women, patients and childless people to stay away safely from the battlefields. This has been well illustrated in the following poem<sup>6</sup> penned by Neṭṭimaiyār who sings for the king Pāṇḍiyan Palyāgasālai Mudukuḍumip Peruvaḷudi.

He announces in a righteous manner, “Cows,  
Brahmins with the nature of cows, women, those  
who are sick, and those living in the Southern  
Land with no gold-like sons to perform precious  
last rites, take refuge! We are ready to shoot  
volleys of arrows!”  
(Neṭṭimaiyār, *PNU*. 9: 1–6, Tr. Vaidehi)<sup>7</sup>

Though king Peruvaḷudi wishes to be victorious yet he shows his kind heart by adhering to the certain norms of wars. He does not wish enemy’s innocent people to lose their lives. So he informs

them well in advance to stay away from the battlefield. Not only these people's lives are spared but also other people like cowards, men who run away from battlefield, young children, and old-aged people are also equally spared from attack. This has been adhered to as a virtue of war in those times.

Before venturing out on wars, kings customarily seek fortune from a soothsayer. This virtue of 'little tradition' has seemingly been described in the following *Puṛaṇāṇūru* poem. "A sooth-saying old woman scatters paddy and water and tells omens to the people who listen to her oracle", (Māṛōkkattu Nappasalaiyār, *PNU*. 280). The erstwhile kings adhere to the ethics of waging battles/wars only during daytime (Iḍaikkunṛūr Kiḷār, *PNU*. 79). Warriors usually stay in camps during nights. Battles are seldom conducted in fertile lands. Barren lands and sandy regions are the venues chosen for battles. The place names such as Veṇṇip Paṛantalai and Talaiyālankāṇam, the venues of erstwhile battles, do certify the aforesaid statement.

In the Sangam age, kings desire to fight with enemies who willingly wage battle. Kings then entertain the ethical principle of forgiving their enemies when they surrender in battles. For instance, the kings Imayavarambaṇ Neḍuñcēralādaṇ and Cōḷaṇ Iḷaṇcēṭcenni earnestly accept the tributes from their opponent kings when they concede their defeats and surrender themselves voluntarily (Kuṟuñkōḷiyūr Kiḷār, *PNU*. 17 & Ūṇpodi Pasuñkuḍaiyār, *PNU*. 10). It is not an ethos of kings in Sangam times hiding themselves inside their palaces without waging war when their forts are besieged by enemies. The poet Kōvūr Kiḷār in the following poem (*PNU*. 44)<sup>8</sup> chides the king Neḍuñkilli for his inaction – neither has he surrendered nor has he confronted his estranged cousin, the king Nalañkilli, when the latter besieges his palace. The poet speaks to him straight without worrying for his life. He rightly spells out the virtue of martial laws as follows:

If you are righteous, open the gates and tell him  
 that it is his. If you live by martial laws, open and fight!  
 If you are without righteousness or martial courage  
 and just hide on one side within your high walls,  
 your gates with sturdy headers closed, it is cause for shame!  
 (Kōvūr Kiḷār, *PNU*. 44: 11–16, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>9</sup>

Victory or defeat is immaterial for righteous kings. But one of the moral principles of kings in ancient times is to fight valiantly with their enemies in the battlefields. Running away from battlefields, bearing wounds on back and becoming prisoners of alien kings are considered ill-reputations of self-esteeming kings. The imposing kings always wish to have an honorable death while fighting in the battlefields. A king Cēramāṇ Neḍuñcēralāḍaṇ once gets defeated by his counterpart Karikāl Cōḷaṇ. Thereby he bears wounds in his back. Hugely embarrassed that he bears a wound on his back, the disgraced king feels utterly sad. Ashamed of the wound on his back, he starved himself to death by sitting, facing the north at the Veṇṇik Paṇtalai battlefield. We come across this sort of high ethics adhered by kings in several poems of *Puṇam* anthology (Kaḷāttalaiyār, *PNU*. 65 & Veṇṇik Kuḷattiyār, *PNU*. 66). Along with such noble kings, sometimes their friends also sacrifice their lives. Thus they show their loyal and true friendship. The poet/bard Picirāndaiyār, a great friend of Kōpperuñcōḷaṇ whom he has never seen/met before, carries out this extraordinary/unbelievable act. The king has problems with his own sons who rise up in arms against him. He feels that they have disgraced his lineage. So he sits facing north, starves himself to death. Along with him sit his great soul-mate Picirāndaiyār and other poets, facing north and starve themselves to death (Kōpperuñcōḷaṇ, *PNU*. 214–16). These poets once hugely benefitted and enjoyed the largesse of the generous king. Now they desire to repay their debt by joining him at death

and showing their solidarity. This is the ethics that they consider as more important than their own lives. What they ever seek is ‘*naṛpeyar*’ (good name) or ‘*pugal*’ (honour) in their life time as well as in their death. But certainly they do not wish to have ‘*nāṇ*’ (shame) or ‘*paḷi*’ (blame) in their private or public life. That is why, the king Cēramāṇ Peruñcēralādaṇ (known for his martial courage and skill) – chooses to die facing north since he bears a wound on his back when he is defeated by the Cōḷa king Karikāḷaṇ at Veṇṇi battlefield (Kaḷāttalaiyār, *PNU*. 65). In a similar fashion, another king also does the same but for a different reason. The king Cēramāṇ Kaṇaikkāl Irumporai is once defeated by the Cōḷa Ceṇkaṇṇaṇ at Kaḷumalam battle. He is imprisoned, put into a small cell and ill-treated. Feeling thirsty, he asks for a glass of water. Least bothered about his request, a royal servant brings water after much delay. Feeling utterly sad about the ill-treatment, he refuses to quench his thirst and dies without sipping even a drop of water. Before his death, he himself vouches his high moral in the following poem<sup>10</sup> in which his “super ego” is adeptly demonstrated. In the Sangam times, *while to a woman chastity is hailed greater than her life, to a man it is self-esteem*. Let us see, how the poem brilliantly evokes the sky-high ethos to our amusement.

If a child was stillborn or born as a mass of flesh,  
 my ancestors, even though they knew it was not human,  
 treat it as such and cut it with a sword. It has now  
 come to this, and I’m sitting here suffering like a dog  
 in chains, not cut up like a hero, without any mental  
 strength, pleading for a little food to those who are  
 without generosity, to calm down the fire  
 in my stomach. What will this world think about me?  
 (Cēramāṇ Kaṇaikkāl Irumporai, *PNU*. 74, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>11</sup>

It is clear that just in the interest of saving their personal reputation, distinguished personalities like poets, warriors and kings have sacrificed their own lives in the bygone era. In a similar fashion, some women of high culture also have shown their high moral values by ending their lives so as to save their dignity or chastity. Unable to bear the loss of their beloved royal husbands, and to save themselves from the likely sexual exploitation of enemy kings, some erstwhile queens have ended their lives. These royal women, who once lived as queens, do not wish to be slaves or subordinates to alien kings. So they wishfully put an end to their lives by entering into the burning pyre with the body of their spouses. This pan Indian custom is known as 'sati' in Sanskrit/Aryan tradition. This painful, irrational but eulogizing custom is earnestly adhered to by a queen namely Peruṅkōp-  
peṇḍu when her husband Ollaiyūr Tanda Bhūdap Pāṇḍiyan becomes deceased (Peruṅkōppeṇḍu, *PNU*. 246 & Maduraip Pēṛālavāyar, *PNU*. 247). Though she is from an ancient royal clan and can survive with a minimum damage to her reputation yet she does not wish to live but chooses to die with highly laudable chastity or dignity. Perhaps, this is a typical ethical principle of royal women that we come across in those historic times. Though it is a custom not welcomed by everyone but upheld at individual level by such women for personal reasons. Some noble people try their level best to save the erstwhile queen from such self-annihilation however unsuccessfully. Strangely, she finds fault with their humanitarianism and blames them as indulging in conniving in the poem<sup>12</sup> as follows:

You noble men! You noble men!  
 You don't let me go, you don't let me die,  
 you scheming noble men!  
 I am not a woman who desires to eat

a cut open seeded curved cucumber with stripes  
 like that of a squirrel,  
 or boiled *vēlai* leaves without fragrant ghee.  
 I don't desire to eat old rice with water squeezed out,  
 mixed with ground white sesame and tamarind.  
 I am not one who wants to sleep on a bed of gravel,  
 without a mat.  
 The funeral pyre of black twigs might be fearful to you.  
 It is not fearful to me  
 who has lost my broad-shouldered husband.  
 A pond with thick-petaled, blooming lotus blossoms  
 and a fire are both same to me!  
 (Peruṅkōppenḍu, *PNU*. 246, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>13</sup>

It seems that this ethos is duly sanctified at societal level only for royal queens. The same is not upheld/adhered to by women of other strata. Wives of those men – who die not by taking part in battles/wars but naturally – do not end their lives in this fashion. However, “They chop off their hairs, remove their bangles and just eat water-lily seeds”, (Tāyaṅkaṇṇiyār, *PNU*. 250); “Abandon their jewels, shave their heads, eat the tiny seeds of *āmbal* (water-lily)”, (Mārōkkattu Nappasalaiyār, *PNU*. 280). These women seem to have enjoyed the support of their family members and social protection. Having backing from their kith and kin and no threat to their chastity/modesty, the women sans the queens of Sangam age do not embrace the “*uḍaṇ kaṭṭai ērudal*” (*sati*) but have led their lives peacefully. This horrifying custom though inhuman and unlawful but is still prevalent here and there in some parts of north India under the nose of patriarchal social norms. The Brahmin Tamil women till recently are observing this tradition, either willfully or otherwise. They shave off their heads, not sport the *kuṇḡumappoṭṭu* (vermilion *tilak*) on their foreheads, remove their bangles; shun their jewels,

attire saffron clothes, eat only non-spicy foods, and sleep on the floor with no usual beds. The non-Brahmin Tamil women, while adhering sincerely to all the norms justified customarily in their widowhood lives, however, do not attire the saffron *sarees* as their counterparts do. It is, indeed, quite surprising that the non-Brahmin Tamil women of Sangam period too have shaved off their heads like the Brahmin Tamil women who are observing the ritual since ages.

### **King – Embodiment of Ethical Principles:**

In the Sangam era, the king has been considered as the life force of his country while citizens the bodies. The ancient kingdoms are ruled by kings keeping themselves as the central/pivotal figures. In the bygone era, “Rice is not life! Water is not life! The king is life for his wide world”, (*Mōcikīraṇār*, *PNU*. 186). A poet Madurai Marudaṇ Iḷaṇāgaṇār while underlining the significance of ethical factors to the king Pāṇḍiyaṇ Iḷavandigaip Paḷḷit Tuñciya Naṇmāraṇ says: “Even though a king is bestowed with four kinds of armies comprising of murderous elephants with fierce rage, proud swift horses, tall chariots with rising flags and foot soldiers with strength in their hearts and desire for battles, yet his esteemed righteousness is the foremost factor (which commands high respect in the eyes of public) that ensures real victory”, (*PNU*. 55). While elaborating more on the subject and greeting the king, he earnestly requests him to be courteous even to the subjects of his enemies. So he adds: “Not thinking that they are ‘ours’ and being unjust to favour them, and not hurting others because they are ‘not ours’, with bravery and manliness like the sun, with coolness like the moon and charitable like the sky, possessing these three great virtues, may you live a long life, so that there will not be people in need without anything!”.



The ethical principle stand of the poet is nothing but advocating for ‘universal brotherhood’ in the poem. The same ethical notion has been essayed elsewhere also in some poems of the Sangam classics. For instance, the poet Kaḍiyālūr Uruttiraiṇ Kaṇṇaṇār while praising the impeccable reigning of the king Iḷantiraiyaṇ says that the latter is greater than the three great kings (Cēra, Cōḷa and Pāṇḍiya kings) with armies of roaring drums who protect lives on this wide earth. The king’s faultless splendor is greater than right-whorled conch from the wide ocean (*Perumpāṇ Ḍṛruppāḍai*, lines 32–36). The same poet in another poem lauds King Karikāl Vaḷavaṇ (Cōḷa dynasty) when the latter has established “*aṛam nilaiyiya agaṇ aṭṭil*” (lit. “For justice to stay a huge kitchen”), a huge free feeding kitchen for public in his capital city Kāviriṇṇūmpaṭṭiṇam (*Paṭṭiṇappālai*, Line 43). Thus, the poet hails the noble acts of kings who protect the people of even enemy kings and provide free public kitchen to his country people as a righteous act that one can wish. In short, *doing any good thing is considered as an ethical deed in olden days*. “If a person is not in a position to do any good deed, at least, he/she should avoid doing any harm to others. That itself, becomes an ethical act”, thus opines the poet Nariverūṭ Talaiyār in the following poem<sup>14</sup>.

You noble men! You noble men!  
 Your white hairs are like the bones  
 of a carp! Your skin is wrinkled! Your  
 old age is fruitless, noble men!  
 You will feel sad when the one with fierce  
 power and sharp axe comes to tie you up.  
 Even if you don’t do good deeds, avoid  
 doing bad ones! If you do that, it will bring  
 joy to all, and also lead you on a good path!  
 (Nariverūṭ Talaiyār, *PNU*. 195, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>15</sup>

Needless to say, this is the virtuous act one can easily adhere to at any point of time in his/her life span. Isn't it? Yet again the same poet advises another king Cēramāṇ Kōpperuñcēral in another poem as follows: "I have to tell you something! Protect your country like you would guard a child, without being in the company of those who will go to unending hell without any grace or kindness", (Nariverūṭ Talaiyār, *PNU*. 5). He expects a king should protect his people just like the way a mother guards her children. At the same time he warns that the king should be away from the company of bad elements which will be good for him as well as his countrymen.

Like a mother to her children, the king is supposed to treat all his people with no partiality like the pointer of a balance that measures large quantities (Kāri Kīlār, *PNU*. 6). He should not flatter someone because they are strong; must not put down anyone because they are weak. He is not allowed to beg from others and need not deny to others when asked for help (Pēreyil Muṇṇuvalār, *PNU*. 239). These poets further aspire that if a king holding absolute authority wishes to be admired by everyone then he has to be away from the dominion and demonic traits as they corrupt him and damage his reputation. The aforesaid poets in general do expect the erstwhile kings to possess together of the two traits such as 'valour' and 'munificence' simultaneously. In fact, they glorify the munificence attribute of kings more than their valour. They willfully greet the kings to become extraordinary hosts to the bards who visit them at their royal courts. In a long poem *Porunar Āṟruppaḍai*<sup>16</sup>, the poet Muḍattāmak Kaṇṇiyār (through the mouth of one bard) vividly describes, though to some extent unrealistically, the compassionate attitude and pleasing attribute of the king Karikāl Vaḷavaṇ who captivates a bard, his guest. The bard discloses his delightful feelings as follows:

The king treated me like a relative,  
 was one with me desiring friendship,  
 made me stay near him with hospitality  
 and kind words, and looked at  
 me with unending kindness that  
 melted me and chilled my bones.  
 He removed my torn clothes drenched  
 in sweat, patched with different  
 threads and ruled by lice and nits, and  
 gave me clothing filled with flower designs,  
 so fine like the skin of a snake,  
 that I was unable to see the weave.  
 (Muḍattāmak Kaṇṇiyār, *Porunar Ārṛuppaḍai*,  
 Lines 74–83, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>17</sup>

After providing proper clothes to the bard, the king has served him with more and more rounds of liquors in golden bowls through his pretty maid servants (*Ibid.*, Lines 85–86). He has also made him stay on one side of his rich palace. So the latter has slept well. Thereby his mental distress vanished (*Ibid.*, Lines 84–93). Then the king provided him a large quantity of rice food cooked with thick thigh meat of sheep (*Ibid.*, Lines 102–05). He has entertained him with music and dance performances performed by beautiful female artists (*Ibid.*, Lines 109–11). Finally, while seeing off the bard though reluctantly, the king gifted him a herd comprised of bull elephants along with their females and calves and showered him with lots of gifts again and again (*Ibid.*, Lines 125–29). Thus, he extended the royal hospitality to the poor bard with his big heart and virtually ended the poverty of the latter. Though this long poem sounds a bit unrealistic but speaks beautifully of the pathetic condition of the bard and the big heart of the king simultaneously to our amusement. These are the traits of high principles earnestly expected by the poets of the bygone era from their kings who excel in battles.

### **Ethical Principles Adhered to in *Magatpār Kāñci* (War Ensuing from Seeking Girl in Marriage):**

In the Sangam times, battles used to take place for several reasons. It is heartening to know that strangely sometimes, in the heroic age, wars also have been waged when some kings come seeking a girl in marriage from a royal clan. This peculiar category of showing one's muscle power to enemy kings is known as "*Magatpār Kāñci*" (lit. *magal* = daughter > female, *pāl* = gender or related/through, *kāñci* = impermanence/transience i.e. 'ephemeral life ensuing through daughter/female') in Tamil. Perhaps, this may be a heroic trait of ancient Tamil kings who does not wish to compromise with the sworn enemies by any means. Details of battles that ensued in refusing to give daughter in marriage to kings are vividly described in several *puram* poems (in *Puranāṇūru* alone 21 poems i.e. 336 through 356). These poems describe very strange situations where the three mighty Tamil kings (kings from Cēra, Cōḷa and Pāṇḍiya dynasties) come for the hands of young girls from ancient clans, which refuse their daughters for marriage. When they are confronted, the fathers and brothers of the girls fight with their weapons and chase away the suitors. The suitors cause terrible damages to the towns. The people in such towns then live constantly in fear. Genuine feelings and nice gestures from unfriendly kings are invariably doubted. "The desire of "self-protection" or "expanding the territory of kingdom" often drives the chieftains/kings to wage wars on some pretext or other" (Rajagopal 2015: 83).

*In the ancient Tamil culture, it seems, marriages between adults have taken place only after their courtship. Perhaps, no conventional/traditional marriage system solemnized by parents does exist then.* When the kings from the three great dynasties formally seek the hand of a beautiful girl from her parents of

ancient clan, they are snubbed due to their arrogance and hostility prevailing already between them. Consequently, battles take place. The kings, as they are monarchs, speak harshly to the parents of girls resulting in wars. See how the people of an ancient city express about the situation of animosity that prevails between the kings in the following poem<sup>18</sup>.

The king wipes the sweat from his forehead with the tip  
of his spear and speaks harshly. Her father does not say  
anything rude or humble. If this is their policy, the  
dark, pretty young girl with sharp teeth and moist pretty  
eyes with streaks is like a small fire kindled with wood.  
She is a terror to this town where she was born!  
(Madurai Marudaṇ Iḷanāgaṇār, *PNU*. 349, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>19</sup>

In the Sangam period, as the following literary evidences suggest, the girls' parents of ancient clan simply do not accept the matrimonial alliances from the mighty kings. Probably, it may be due to their fear that the latter would usurp their land and wealth unscrupulously and would make them their subjects forever. Besides their fear, the small kings expect the mighty kings to behave with courteousness, humility and decency while seeking their girls in matrimonial alliance. In the absence of these fine gestures, the girls' parents do out-rightly reject the alliances of mighty kings. Thereby a number of battles have been waged in the ancient Tamil society. This has been evidently essayed in several poems as follows:

“If the three great victorious kings, wearing on their heads strands of neem, *ātti*, and palm come with bows, but do not pay homage to him, he will not give his naïve daughter”, (Kuṇṇūr Kiḷār, *PNU*. 338); “The father of the young girl will not give her to the king, even though he begs for her”, (Paraṇar, *PNU*. 341); “Her father will not agree to give her in marriage [...] even if they come asking

for her, kings who are victorious in battles”, (Madurai Paḍaimaṅga Maṇṇiyār, *PNU*. 351); Her brothers do not want wealth. They will not give her to any man who is not their equal. They desire to enter battles”, (Aḍaineḍum Kalviyār, *PNU*. 345); “Even if he were given valuable gifts equal to Uṇḍai with white paddy fields, a town ruled by Tittaṇ who trades in toddy, the man of imposing virtues will not accept them”, (Paraṇar, *PNU*. 352).

The aforesaid references thus highlight the heroic culture of ancient Tamils who wish to have a respectable and sovereign life of their own. This is a unique dignity of erstwhile kings addressed empirically in a handful of *Puranānūru* poems.

### **Ethical Principles Addressed/Adhered to by Poets:**

Poets, the real personae, are significant characters in the Sangam anthologies who often address a volume of ethical principles or moral codes and conducts to individuals, public and kings. Among them, there are a number of bards/minstrels, “the wandering tribal encyclopedias” (Ramanujan 1985: 290) who tangibly enlist numerous ethical principles that one can uphold in his/her personal and public life. All the poets virtually underline the importance of moral values and their benefits for everyone to have a blissful life in the world. The poets/bards are, indeed, the men of wisdom, audacity, integrity who usually possess most impeccable qualities. They command good respect from kings as well as the public simultaneously. Being a part of their societies, they are personally aware of people’s feelings and problems as well as their expectations from their kings. Having a close contact with the rulers, they also are aware of the latter’s obligations, convictions and compulsions in governing their countries effectively. So the poets often serve the dual roles commendably together – as a representative of the public as well as a propa-

gating agency of the kings' policies. Although they are VIPs yet they all apparently live 'the life of hand to mouth'. Hence, they often visit and praise patrons/chieftains/kings aiming for gifts and financial aids. It is true that sometimes they eulogize their patrons a bit unrealistically but do not exaggerate the fine qualities that are not to be. "In order to live, I do not lie. I am telling the truth", thus states the poet Madurai Marudaṇ Ḥanāgaṇār to his patron Nāñcil Vaḷḷuvaṇ (*PNU*. 139). The same is also uttered by other poets Vaṇparaṇar and Uṛaiyūr Ēṇiccēri Muḍamōciyār to their kings Kōpperu Naḷḷi and Āy Andiraṇ respectively as follows: "I praise you for the desired wealth that you acquired by strong efforts, without any weakness. [...] I do not sing the praises of kings with no pride or sing about things that they did not do. My eloquent tongue will not do that", (*PNU*. 148); "May those like me not sing to the wealthy with no pride, who don't understand even a little bit, even if we sing standing right near them!", (*PNU*. 75). The poets thus adhere to an ethical principle of speaking about the facts tangibly though for personal gains. However, they do admonish/condemn their patrons, purely on the humanitarian ground, when they find fault with them.

Often and again, several poets praise the kings who wage battles with others. As the poets see waging wars as a moral act of kings, they intently portray the horrific scenes of battlefields. They justify the wars and the destructive acts of kings as the latter are bound to show their love and responsibility towards their country people. In this respect, the poets just act as a propagating agency of their kingdoms and eulogizing the heroic deeds of kings. For instance, let us see the following utterances here: "The king Ḥamperuñceṇṇi to do his duty to citizens finished his impending (war) work; ruined Pāḷi fort which is (strong) like copper, and chopped the heads of new Vaḍugars and killed them", (*Idaiyaṇ Cēndaṅkorraṇār*, *ANU*. 375); "O

Vaḷavaṇ riding your elegant chariot! There remains nothing in your enemy countries where there were prosperous towns, where, instead of mud, they used fish to block holes of dams with sounds of cool flowing water!", (Karun̄kuḷal Āḍaṇār, *PNU*. 7); "May your garlands wither assaulted by the fragrant smoke of flames rising from the lands of your enemies!", (Kāri Kīḷār, *PNU*. 6). But a poet named Aḍaineḍum Kalviyār just rejects this aforesaid notion and says, "the one (king) who spreads hostile fire and smoke and fight is a man possessed of 'paṇbil āṇmai' (without manliness or character)", (*PNU*. 344).

Being a part of the public, the poets duly acknowledges the ethical principles upheld by kings in several instances. They also do express their aspirations in this regard. A poet Añcil Āndaiyār says, "A man who does not deviate from the path of the wise men or nobles is a virtuous person", (*NRI*. 233). Another poet named Pālaik Kaudamaṇār, a Brahmin by lineage, enlists the following simple but deterring ethical principles to the king Palyāṇaic Celkeḷu Kuṭṭuvaṇ for a just faultless reigning in the following *Paḍirrupattu* poem<sup>20</sup>:

Excesses of anger, lust, joy, fear, lying,  
kindness, harsh treatment of criminals and  
other such traits are hindrances in this world  
for a just king with faultless wheel of power.  
(Pālaik Kaudamaṇār, *PPU*. 22: 1–4, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>21</sup>

Again the same poet, true to his Brahmin lineage, explicitly advises the same king to adhere to the ethical codes of respecting the Brahmins as follows: "You listen to virtuous Brahmins who follow the six noble traditions of chanting, performing rituals, chanting for others, performing rituals for others, donating and receiving", (*PPU*. 24). However, a king cum poet Cōḷaṇ Nalaṇ-



killi equitably emphasizes, “If a king is imploring his subjects to pay him heavy taxes then he is possessed of ‘*kūril āṇmai*’ (lacking manliness) and his kingship is a burdensome one”, (*PNU*. 75).

While the poets are really happy over the ethical conduct of kings, they wholeheartedly greet/bleed the rulers as follows: “O king Poraiyaṇ (Kuḍakkō Ḵancēral Irumporai) with an army with spears and a just scepter! You are adored and praised every day by the citizens of your country and by celestials in the upper world. You rule without blemish, and you are victorious in battles. May you live without diseases”, (Peruṅkuṇṇūr Kīlār, *PPU*. 89); “May you (the king Peruṅcōṛru Udiyaṇ Cēralādaṇ) never be shaken like the Mount Podiyam, like the Himalayas with its golden summits”, (Murañciyūr Muḍināgaṇār, *PNU*. 2); “May he [...] our king Kuḍumi (Pāṇḍiyaṇ Palyāgasālai Mudukuḍumip Peruvaḷudi) live for a many years, more than the grains of sand on the banks of *Pahruḷi* river with fine water”, (Neṭṭimaiyār, *PNU*. 9). From these passages, we can comprehend how far these poets desire and wish their kings to be the upholders of righteousness to his subjects.

### **Humanitarianism – An Ethical Conduct:**

Almost all the Sangam poets do advocate the principle of humanism just for the welfare of humankind. A poet in *Kalitogai* anthology says, “The human beings who with no graces and sense of justice, instill fear in others and do not do any good deeds to his/her fellow beings are just unjust people”, (*KLT*. 120). Needless to say, numerous battles have been and are being waged since historical times till date especially in the absence of humanism among human beings. Due to the wars, ‘countless

cities, and numerous forts are destroyed', (*PNU*. 6, 16, 23, 37, 57, 97, 224); 'plentiful of fertile lands are ruined', (*PNU*. 15, 37, 40, 52, 57) beyond repairing. 'The place which caught in battles is ruined. So spread there sponge gourd; houses are ruined; elk occupy the town's square' (*ANU*. 373). 'The once prosperous towns are gravely robbed' (*PNU*. 7). "O *Valavaṇ!* The lights lit by your armies in the towns of enemies are still burning, so there are loud crying sounds. Since you plundered the prosperous city with your elegant chariot, there is nothing left" (*Ibid.*).

Being responsible citizens, the poets show their agony and despair over such man-made disasters. In the pretext of eulogizing the heroic deeds of kings, they implicitly admonish their destructive acts. Let us comprehend, how in the following poem<sup>22</sup>, the poet *Neṭṭimaiyār* discreetly reproach the destructive acts of *Pāṇḍiyaṇ Palyāgasālai Mudukuḍumip Peruvaḷudi*.

On the streets of your enemy countries dug up by your  
fast chariots, you yoked lowly herds of white-mouthed  
donkeys, and plowed their protected vast spaces.  
You rode your chariot across their land, and the curved  
hooves of your horses, galloping with their white plumes  
furrowed their famed, fertile fields where flocks of birds  
sing. You ruined their guarded ponds with your elephants  
with enraged looks, huge swaying necks, large feet, and  
gleaming tusks.

[...]

O Greatness, your valor is the proper theme for songs that  
celebrate invasions, performed by women singers to the beats  
of drums smeared with clay and tied tightly with leather strips!  
(*Neṭṭimaiyār* to *Pāṇḍiyaṇ Palyāgasālai Mudukuḍumip*  
*Peruvaḷudi*, *PNU*. 15, Tr.: *Vaidehi*)<sup>23</sup>

Sometimes, the poets do outright express their dismay and disapproval over the demonic behaviour of their kings who just

delight in destroying the countries of enemies. At times, they feel that they have a moral responsibility to tell the erring kings in the poems<sup>24</sup> as follows:

The sun which yields benefits  
sets in the west and rises  
in the east, removing darkness.  
When it does not slant at midday,  
white foxes howl in the curved wasteland paths,  
and responding owls with whirling eyes  
hoot at regular intervals,  
a black-eyed female ghouel dancing to their hoots.  
Their country is totally ruined. They are pitiable.  
(Pālaik Kaudamaṇār, *PPU*. 22: 30–38, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>25</sup>

Their fields where chariot wheels  
have furrowed the land,  
do not need ploughing with oxen.  
Their lands where battle elephants were active,  
do not need tilling.  
There are no sweet instrument sounds from homes  
that used to churn butter with churning rods.  
Those who had seen their prosperity then,  
will feel sad for them now.  
I feel sorry for your enemies.  
(Pālaik Kaudamaṇār, *PPU*. 26: 1–5, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>26</sup>

Apparently, these destructions must have affected, and distressed the erstwhile people. Their lives might have been shattered; peace must have dwindled; their agricultural economy might have been ruined. When fertile lands and water resources are damaged beyond repairing undoubtedly poverty must be on the rise. So in the shortage of wealth for basic needs, the poets/bards/minstrels in that historical period might have visited promising patrons. We do not know how many of them are chased

away, in what manners they are belittled/chided by unconcerned patrons whom the former visited. We do not have any literary evidence in this regard. However, there is a painful utterance made sarcastically on one unkind patron named Pāṇḍiyan Ilavandigaippallit Tuñciya Naṁmāraṇ by Āvūr Mūlaṅkiḷār. Let us see the poem<sup>27</sup> here.

To give to others what one is capable of, and  
deny when one is unable to give, are both good  
traits of manhood.  
Saying that one will give when one cannot, or  
denying helping saying that there is nothing  
to give, are both traits that will hurt those  
in need and destroy the good name of benefactors.  
This is what it is, and let it be as it is.  
We have not seen anything like this before. Now  
we have seen. **May your children stay without  
any disease!** I don't hate the sun or get lazy  
when it is cold.  
Thinking about my bright-fore headed, delicate  
chaste woman in our house that just blocks winds,  
due to my poverty which seems made of rock,  
I will move on. **May you have a great day!**  
(Āvūr Mūlaṅkiḷār sang to Pāṇḍiyan Ilavandigaip  
Pallit Tuñciya Naṁmāraṇ, *PNU*. 196, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>28</sup>  
(Emphasizes are mine).

In the weakening of humanism, numerous kings do enormous heinous deeds. However, the poets do not close their eyes or shut their mouths on witnessing inhuman activities. They tacitly chide the kings; explicitly condemn them. Hence, goodwill has prevailed; human relationship is safeguarded; battles are stopped and peace is brokered between warring groups at times. Once the king Kōpperuñcōḷaṇ develops misunderstanding with his own

sons who rise up in arms against him. He feels that they have disgraced his lineage. So he decides to teach them a lesson by waging a battle. Sensing the mood of the king and the ruins awaiting, the poet Pullāṟṟūr Eyirriyaṇār candidly advises the king to avoid going to battle with his own sons at any cost. He reasons out as follows in the poem<sup>29</sup>.

O victorious king with great  
strength and effort  
who kills in ferocious battles!  
You with a bright white umbrella  
that protects!  
If you think about the two men who  
are advancing against you  
in this wide world that is  
draped by overflowing oceans,  
they are not ancient enemies of yours  
with strength.  
When you think about them rising up to  
confront you in battles,  
you are not that kind of enemy either,  
O lord owning murderous elephants!

You have earned wide-ranging reputation,  
and when you go to the higher world  
the rights that you would relinquish  
will be theirs by inheritance.  
So understand this well, and listen to me,  
O King who desires glory!

If these youngsters who have risen up  
against you with strength and thoughtless  
ideas lose, to whom will you leave your  
great wealth, O king who desires battles?  
If you lose to them,

people who despise you will be joyous  
 and you will earn blame!  
 Destroy your martial courage!  
 Rise up fast. May your heart live long!  
 If the shade afforded by your feet  
 which is a refuge to those in distress  
 not lose respect,  
 and for those in the hard-to-attain world  
 where celestials live to receive you as  
 a guest among them, you must act well!  
 (Pullārrūr Eyirriyaṇār, *PNU*. 213, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>30</sup>

Having listened seriously to the counsel of the poet, the king has done away with the battle. So peace has prevailed. The land and water resources are protected. Numerous human beings as well as livestock are saved. When a similar hostility is prevailing once between Neḍuṅkiḷḷi and Nalaṅkiḷḷi, the cousins of Cōḷa dynasty who are set for battle, the poet Kōvūr Kiḷār intervenes on time and counsels them eloquently. Let us observe the following poem<sup>31</sup>:

Your enemy is not the kind who wears  
 the white leaf of the tall palmyra

nor the kind who wears garlands  
 from the black-branched neem trees.

Your chaplets are made of laburnum,  
 your enemies are made of laburnum too.

When one of you loses  
 the family loses,

and it is not possible  
 for both to win.

Your ways show no sense of family:  
they will serve only to thrill  
alien kings

whose chariots are bannered,  
like your own.

(Kōvūr Kiḷār to Neḍuñkiḷli and Nalañkiḷli,  
*PNU*. 45, Tr.: A.K. Ramanujan, 1985: 121)

Though the poet places the hard reality before the warring cousins, yet neither of them heeds to his words. The kings wage the battle compelled by their own *raj dharma* (duty towards (his) kingdom). In a similar fashion, there is another case of warring brothers described in *Puṛaṇāṇūru*. A younger brother named Iḷaṅkumaṇaṇ suddenly one day usurps the kingdom of his elder brother Kumaṇaṇ. To save his life, the latter flees to the forest and hides there. But Iḷaṅkumaṇaṇ is determined to eliminate his elder brother by any means. Subsequently, he announces a cash reward for his elder brother's head. Not aware of this proclamation, one poet named Peruntalaic Cāttaṇār meets the elder Kumaṇaṇ by chance. He desires a gift from him. Not possessing anything to offer then, the exiled king, who is known for bestowing unlimited gifts to bards, comes forward to offer his own head. So he gives his sword to cut off his head. Thereupon, the poet becomes overwhelmed about his stunning offer and realizes the grave situation in which the king is placed. Quickly he reaches Iḷaṅkumaṇaṇ's place and reveals to him about the bewildering offer of kindhearted Kumaṇaṇ (*PNU*. 165). We do not know whether the king exiled duly retrieves his position or not. Obviously, the intention of the poet is not to make money but to correct the younger brother and make him upright. This is a typical ethical behaviour of erstwhile poets who always wish leading a life of nobility.

These men of intellect known for their integrity continually work for the welfare of society. Though they struggle in penury yet usually never they immorally aspire for any gift or wealth from anyone. Such is their dignity and decency. If they see any unfairness or wrong doing, they do not hesitate to point out those flaws. This group of people with a humanistic perspective feels that by generating shame and guilt in the perpetrators' mind on their wrongdoings and guiding them to better sense, their negative mindset can be altered. So they do counsel mighty kings, their patrons on several occasions by risking their own life. There are numerous such poets/bards who act purely in the interest of others, sometimes to save people and land, sometimes to highlight values and ethos, sometimes to unite estranged wife and husband and at times even cousins.

These poets, courageous by conviction, do excellent service for the cause of humanity. Once, the Cōḷa King Kuḷamurrattut Tuñciya Kiḷḷi Vaḷavaṇ conquers his enemy Malaiyamāṇ in the battle. After eliminating him, he imprisons his little children along with others and brings them to his country only to kill them cruelly. In a public place, where hundreds of people have gathered, he buries them alive, leaving only their heads above the pits to allow the elephants to trample them under foot. Coming to know about the imminent inhuman action, the poet Kōvūr Kiḷār enters the scene at the right moment to save the innocent children. He counsels the cruel king with courage and conviction. Listen to the voice of the poet<sup>32</sup>:

You come from the line of Cōḷa king  
 who gave his flesh  
 for a pigeon in danger,  
                     and for others besides,  
 and these children also come  
 from a line of kings



who in their cool shade  
share all they have

lest poets,  
those tillers of nothing  
but wisdom,  
should suffer hardships.

Look at these children,  
the crowns of their heads are still soft.

As they watch the elephants,  
they even forget to cry,  
stare dumbstruck at the crowd  
in some new terror  
of things unknown.

Now that you've heard me out,  
do what you will.

(Kōvūr Kīlār to Kīlī Vaḷavaṇ, *PNU*. 46,  
Tr.: A.K. Ramanujan, 1985: 122)

The kindhearted poet, concerned for the life of children, does not hesitate to counsel his king when he feels that the latter's action is unjust. Highly respecting the poet's concern and sincerely realizing his mistake, the king sets free the children without harming them by any means. Here we see the thriving spirit of poet that serves the cause of humanism successfully.

In the realm of politics, it is quite natural, fitting and justifiable that one finishes off his/her opponents. "For a man to be defeated or slain by another man is the nature of this world", (Idaikkunrūr Kīlār to Pāṇḍiyaṇ Talaiyālaṅkāṇattuc Ceruveṇṇa Neḍuñceliyaṇ, *PNU*. 76). The self-protecting drive motivates a person to eliminate his/her opponent by any means for survival. Especially, it is more warranted to the kings/chieftains to com-

pletely destroy their enemies with their wives and children. Obviously, therefore they cannot be merciful. If they show them lenience or compassion, then their own lives and the survival of their kith and kin, clan, and people would be, no doubt, in peril. Surely, they would perish in a matter of time. But for noble men, these reasons are out of reach. No matter who the others are, all humans are one community for them, irrespective of creed, color, profession, gender, and age. The same poet Kōvūr Kiḷār once again does the role of “savior”. Neḍuñkiḷḷi, a Cola king, somehow doubts the integrity of a poet Iḷandattan. He suspects him as a spy. He is about to execute him on one day. Coming to know this, the poet rushes to the king and explains the noble lives of poets in general and that of the poet concerned in particular. See here how Kōvūr Kiḷār tangibly explains the nobility of poets to the king in the following poem<sup>33</sup>:

Going to patrons like a bird, without thinking  
that it is far, passing many wastelands and  
singing what they can sing with their imperfect  
tongues, being happy for what is given to them,  
eating without saving and giving to others  
without holding back, is the sad life of those  
in need. Is this life harmful to others?  
Other than causing shame to rivals who sing,  
when they walk off with their heads held high,  
they are happy.  
Their life is as fine as yours, you with soaring fame  
who rules the land and has attained great wealth!  
(Kōvūr Kiḷār to Nalañkiḷḷi, *PNU*. 47, Tr.: Vaidehi)<sup>34</sup>

When the poets feel that the rulers do mistakes or deviate from the path of ethics, they advise, admonish them at times with no

hesitation. This is their usual ethos. For instance, ‘they refuse to sing on one cruel king *Nanṇan* and his entire clan as he has murdered a young girl outrageously’ (*PNU*. 151). A young girl has eaten a mango from a tree of the king that comes floating on the stream water. The cruel king construes it as a crime and murders her. Thereby he earns the dubious name as “*Peṇ kolai purinda Nanṇan*” (*Nanṇan* who has murdered a girl). The poets just wish and conduct themselves as the upholders of ethos and moral values throughout the lives. They are the articulate bearers of honor and pride, upright and values.

### **Worship of *Naḍukaḷ* (Erected Stones) – An Ethical Conduct of Heroic Tribes:**

Ancient Tamils worship the five elements of nature (*pañca bhūtas*) such as earth, water, fire, wind, and ether (space). They do worship trees, snakes too. They believe that *pēys* (ghosts), *bhūdams* (ghouls), and *aṇaṅgugaḷs* (*moginis*) reside in plants and trees especially in *kaḷḷi* (cactus plant), *paṇai* (palmyra tree), *āl*, (banyan tree), *kaḍambu* (*Anthocephalus indicus* = *Anthocephalus Cadambai*.e. Cadamba tree) trees. So they sacrifice animals to appease these spirits. The phrases such as “*kaḍavuḷ marāṭta*” (tree with god), (*Cāgālasaṇār*, *ANU*. 270: 12), “*tonṇur-rai kaḍavuḷ cērnda parārai, maṇṇrap peṇṇai*” (palmyra tree with thick trunk, where gods have lived from ancient times), (*Ālam-pēric Cāttaṇār*, *NRI*. 303: 3–4), “*kaḍavuḷ ālattu*” (a banyan tree where god resides), (*Karuvūr Kadappillaic Cāttaṇār*, *NRI*. 343: 4) testify the aforesaid fact. These evidences show that the worship of Gods of ‘great tradition’ viz. Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahma, Pārvati, Lakshmi, Sarasvati *et al.* has not existed in the Sangam times. *Tirumurugu Ārrippaḍai*, and *Paripāḍal*, works on reli-

gion, portraying the invoking of the Gods Murugaṇ, and Viṣṇu evidently belong to later period of Sangam age.

The ancient Tamils, who highly respect the heroic life, obviously worship the heroes who become ‘the martyrs by valiantly waging battles’ as gods. They inscribe the names and heroic deeds of valiant warriors in stones, erect them in prominent places, and worship them. This tradition is known as ‘*naḍukal valipāḍu*’ (Worship of Erected/Planted Stone). This is the widespread worshipping culture of the erstwhile Tamils. They earnestly worship “these shallow graves, decorate the ‘memorial stones’ with peacock feathers, pour rice wine, offer sheep and beat *tuḍi* drums” (Ammūvaṇār, *ANU*. 35: 7–10). “A chivalrous warrior, who brings back the cattle from enemies, dies thereafter bearing wounds. Then, the young hero with victorious spear is reverently worshipped as a god in a memorial stone”, (Āvūr Mūlaṅkiḷār, *PNU*. 261: 13–15). “Tamils in the historical times every morning wash the memorial stones in water, offer food to them and worship them with the lamps lit with ghee”, (Ilavēṭṭaṇār, *PNU*. 329: 1–5). In fact, “there are no gods, other than the memorial stones of heroes who blocked enemies, killed their elephants with lifted, bright tusks and got killed, to be worshipped with rice showering!”, thus extols Māṅkuḍi Kiḷār in a poem (*PNU*. 335: 9–12). These literary evidences, therefore, unequivocally show that *the Tamils are culturally worshippers of memorial stones* but turn to worshipping countless gods belonging to the great tradition at later times.

Thus, it is very clear that the ancient Tamils have earnestly adhered to certain ethical principles/code of conducts/norms/rules and regulations in their *akam* (interior) and *puṇam* (exterior) life; individual and public life. Also sanctimonious family life in *akam* while doing good deeds for poets and

countrymen by kings/chieftains in *puṛam* cannot be ignored. Poets can be considered as the backbone of *puṛam* poems as they are the ones who advocate and propagate moral deeds to fellow citizens by putting them through kings/chieftains. Evidently, the poets of Sangam era have advocated/addressed/recommended several kinds of ethical principles whichever are considered good for human beings then and now. These men of noble attributes have served the society with utmost caring love and total commitment.

To conclude, we may say that the Tamil society is being in existence well beyond two millennium years and excelling in several spheres because it is just adhering to volume of ethical principles since ages for the benefit of themselves as well as others. Also these ethical principles, though, have been practiced for ages, still have contemporary relevance with which people could connect.

---

## Notes

- \* This essay is a revised version of my paper titled ‘Saṅga Ilakkiyamum Aṛakkōṭpāḍum’ (in Tamil) published in *SAṆGA ILAKKI-YAṆGAḶUM KōṭpāḍugaḶum* edited by Dr. A. Arivu Nambi, Dr. M. Mathiyalagan and Dr. N.J. Saravanan, Subramaniya Bharatiyar Tamil School, Pondicherry University, Puducherry – 605014, 2007, pp. 01–23.
- 1. Pēgaṇ once drapes a peacock with his shawl out of deep compassion, thinking it would shiver in the cold during monsoon season (Paraṇar, *PNU*. 141, 142).

2. *ciriyakaḷ perinē emakkīyum maṇṇē*  
*periyakaḷ perinē yām pāḍat*  
*tāṇ magilṇ duṇṇum maṇṇē*  
*cirucōrrāṇum naṇipala kalattaṇ maṇṇē*  
*peruñcōrrāṇum naṇipala kalattaṇ maṇṇē*  
*eṇboḍu taḍipaḍu vaḷiyellām emakkīyum maṇṇē*  
*amboḍu vēlnuḷai vaḷiyellām tāṇnir̥kum maṇṇē*  
*narandam nārum taṅkaikyāl*  
*pulavu nārum entalai taivarum maṇṇē*  
 (Avvaiyar, *Puṛaṇāṇūru* 235: 1–9)
3. Vaidehi, *Purananuru* 201–250 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
 <<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-201-250>>
4. Bühler, George (Tr.), *Manusmṛiti – The Laws of Manu, Part 2*, Accessed on 02<sup>nd</sup> Aug. 2015  
 <[http://www.hinduwebsite.com/sacredsceipts/hinduism/dharma/manusmṛiti\\_2.asp](http://www.hinduwebsite.com/sacredsceipts/hinduism/dharma/manusmṛiti_2.asp)>
5. *aṛattiṇ maṇḍiya maṛappōr vēndar*  
 (Kaḷāttalaiyar, *Puṛaṇāṇūru* 62: 7)
6. *āvum āṇiyal pārppaṇa māḱkaḷum*  
*peṇḍirum piṇiyuḍai yīrum pēṇit*  
*teṇpulam vāḷnark karuṅkaḍaṇ irukkum*  
*poṇpōl pudalvarp perāa dīrum*  
*yemmambu kaḍividudum nummaraṇ cērmīṇeṇa*  
*aṛattāru nuvalum pūṭkai maṛattiṇ*  
 (Neṭṭimaiyar, *Puṛaṇāṇūru* 9: 1–6)
7. Vaidehi, *Purananuru* 1–50 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
 <<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-1-50>>
8. *aṛavai yāyiṇ niṇadenat tīrattal*  
*maṛavai yāyiṇ pōroḍu tīrattal*  
*aṛavaiyum maṛavaiyum allai yāgat*  
*tīravādu aḍaitta tiṇṇilaik kadaviṇ*  
*nīlmaḍil oruciṛai oḍuṅgudal*  
*nāṇuttaga vuḍaittidu kāṇuṅ kālē*  
 (Kōvūr Kiḷār, *Puṛaṇāṇūru* 44: 11–16)

9. Vaidehi, *Purananuru* 1–50 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-1-50>>
10. *kuḷavi yirappiṇum ũṇṭaḍi pīrappiṇum*  
*āḷaṇ reṇṇu vāḷir tappār*  
*toḍarppaḍu ṇamaliyiṇ iḍarppaḍut tirīyiya*  
*kēḷal kēḷir vēḷaṇ ciṇrupadam*  
*madukai yiṇṇi vayiṇṇuttī taṇiyat*  
*tāmīran duṇṇu maḷavai*  
*iṇma rōviv vulagat tāṇē*  
(Cēramāṇ Kaṇaikkāl Irumporai, *Puranāṇūru* 74)
11. Vaidehi, *Purananuru* 51–100 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-1-50>>
12. *palcāṇ rīrē! palcāṇ rīrē!*  
*celgeṇac collādu oḷigeṇa vilakkum*  
*pollāc cūlccip palcāṇ rīrē!*  
*aṇilvarik koḍuṇkāy vāḷpōḷṇ diṭṭa*  
*kāḷpōḷ naḷviḷar naṇuney tīṇḍādu*  
*aḍaiyiḍaik kiḍanda kaipīli piṇḍam*  
*veḷḷeṇ cāndoḍu puḷippey daṭṭa*  
*vēḷai vendai valci yāgap*  
*paralpey paḷḷip pāyiṇṇu vadiyum*  
*uyaval peṇḍirēm allēm mādō*  
*peruṇkāṭṭup paṇṇiya karuṇkōṭ tīmam*  
*numakkari dāguga dilla yemakkem*  
*peruntōḷ kaṇavaṇ māyndeṇa arumbura*  
*vaḷḷidaḷ aviḷṇda tāmarai*  
*naḷḷirum poygaiyum tīyum ōraṇṇē*  
(Peruṇkōppenḍu, *Puranāṇūru* 246)
13. Vaidehi, *Purananuru* 201–250 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-201-250>>
14. *palcāṇ rīrē! palcāṇ rīrē!*  
*kayalmuḷ laṇṇa naraimudir tiraikavuḷ*  
*payāṇil mūppiṇ palcāṇ rīrē!*  
*kaṇiccik kūrmpaḍaik kaḍuntīraḷ oruvaṇ*

*piṇikkum kālai iraṅguvir mādō  
nalladu ceydal ārrīr āyiṇum  
alladu ceydal ōmbumiṇ adudāṇ  
ellārum uvappa daṇṇiyum  
nallārrup paḍūum neriyumār aduvē!*  
(Nariverūut Talaiyār, *Puṇanāṇūru* 195)

15. Vaidehi, *Purananuru* 150–200 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-150-200>>
16. *kēḷir pōlak kēḷkoḷal vēṇḍi  
vēḷāṇ vāyil vētpak kūri  
kaṇṇil kāṇa naṇṇuvaḷi irī  
parugu aṇṇa arugānōkka moḍu  
urugu bavaipō leṇbukuḷir koḷī  
īrum pēṇum irundiṇai kūḍi  
vēroḍu nanaindu vērrīlai nuḷainda  
tuṇṇar cidāṇ tuvara nīkki  
nōkku nuḷaigallā nuṇmaiya pūkkaṇindu  
aravuri yaṇṇa aruvai nalgi*  
(Muḍattāmak Kaṇṇiyār, *Porunar Ārruppaḍai*, Lines 74–83)
17. Vaidehi, *Porunaratrappadai* (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/a-porunaratrappadai/>>
18. *nudivēl koṇḍu nudalviyar toḍaiyāk  
kaḍiya kūrum vēndē tandaiyum  
neḍiya alladu paṇindu moḷiyalaṇē  
ihdivar paḍiva māyiṇ vaiyeyīrru  
arimadar maḷaikkaṇ ammā arivai  
marampaḍu ciṇutīp pōla  
aṇāṅāyi ṇaḷtāṇ piṇanda ūrkkē!*  
(Madurai Marudaṇ Iḷanāgaṇār, *Puṇanāṇūru* 349)
19. Vaidehi, *Purananuru* 301–350 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-301-350/>>
20. *ciṇaṇē kāmam kaḷikaṇ ṇōṭṭam  
accam poyccol aṇbumigu uḍaimai*



*teralkaḍu maiyoḍu pīravum ivvulagat*

*taramteri tigirikku vaḷiyāḍai yāgum*

(Pālaik Kaudamaṇār, *Paḍirruppattu* 22: 1-4)

21. Vaidehi, *Pathitruppathu* 21–30 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.wordpress.com/pathitruppathu-21-30/>>

22. *kaḍuntēr kuḷitta ṇēllal āṇkaṇ*

*veḷvāyk kaḷudaip pulliṇap pūṭṭip*

*pāḷcey daṇaiyavar nanantalai nalleiyil*

*pulliṇam imiḷum pugaḷcāl viḷaivayal*

*veḷḷuḷaik kalimāṇ kavikuḷam bugaḷat*

*tērvāḷaṇ kiṇainiṇ tevvar dēettut*

*tuḷaṇ giyalāl paṇai eruttiṇ*

*pāvaḍi yāl ceṇal nōkkin*

*oḷiru maruppiṇ kaḷiru avara*

*kāppu ḍaiya kayam paḍiyiṇai*

.....

..... *peruma vārurru*

*vicipiṇik koṇḍa maṇkaṇai muḷaviṇ*

*pāḍiṇi pāḍum vaṇcikku*

*nāḍal cāṇra maindiṇōy niṇakke!*

(Neṭṭimaiyār, *Puraṇāṇūru* 15)

23. Vaidehi, *Purananuru* 1–50 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-1-50>>

24. *olittalai viḷaviṇ maliyum yāṇar*

*nāḍukeḷu taṇpaṇai cīriṇai yāḍaliṇ*

*kuḍadisai māyṇdu kuṇamudal tōṇrip*

*pāyiruḷ aḡarum payaṇkeḷu paṇbiṇ*

*ṇāyiru kōḍā naṇpagal amayattuk*

*kavalai veḷnari kūummurāi payirrik*

*kaḷalkaṇ kūgaik kuḷarukural pāṇic*

*karuṇkaṇ pēymagaḷ vaḷaṇḡum*

*perumpā lāḡumaṇ aḷiya tāmē!*

(Pālaik Kaudamaṇār, *Paḍirruppattu* 22: 30–38)

*tēer parandapulam ēer paravā  
 kaḷirāḍiya pulam nāñci lāḍā  
 matturāiya maṇai iṇṇiyam imilā  
 āṇḍup paṇḍunar kariyunar ceḷuvaḷam niṇaiṇṇi  
 nōgō yāṇē nōdaga varumē!*

(Pālaik Kaudamaṇār, *Paḍirruppattu* 26: 1–5)

25. Vaidehi, *Pathitruppathu* 21–30 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.wordpress.com/pathitruppathu-21-30/>>

26. *Ibid.*

27. *olluvadu ollum eṇṇalum yāvarkkum  
 ollādu illēṇa maruttalum iraṇḍum  
 āḷviṇai maruṇḍiṇ kēṇmaip pālē  
 ollādu ollum eṇṇalum olluvadu  
 illēṇa maruttalum iraṇḍum vallē  
 irappōr vāṭṭal aṇṇiyum purappōr  
 puḡaḷ kuṇṇaiṇṇi vāyil Attai  
 aṇaiṭṭā giyar iṇṇiyiduvē eṇaiṭṭum  
 cēyṭtuk kāṇādu kaṇḍaṇam adaṇṇāl  
 nōyilar āgaṇiṇ pudalvar yāṇum  
 veyileṇa muṇiyēṇ paṇṇiyēṇ maḍiyēṇ  
 kalkuyiṇ raṇṇaveṇ nalkūr vaḷimarai  
 nāṇaladu illāk kaṇṇiṇ vāṇudal  
 melliyal kuṇṇumagaḷ uḷḷic  
 celval Attai ciṇakkaniṇ nālē!*

(Āvūr Mūlaṇkiḷār sang to Pāṇḍiyaṇ Ilavandigaippaḷḷit

Tuṇṇiya Naṇmāraṇ, *Puranāṇūru* 196)

28. Vaidehi, *Purananuru* 150–200 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-150-200>>

29. *maṇḍama raṭṭa madaṇuḍai nōṇṭāl  
 veṇkuḍai viḷakkum viṇalkeḷu vēndē!  
 poṇḡunīr uḍuttayim malartalai ulagattu  
 niṇṭalai vanda iruvarai niṇaiṇṇi  
 tonṇururai tuppṇiṇ niṇṇipagiṇṇarum allar  
 amarveṇ kāṇciyoḍu māṇḍirbu eḷundavar*

niṇaiyunkālai allai nīyum marṛavarkku  
 aṇaiyai allai aḍumāṇ tōṇral  
 parandupaḍu nallisai eydi marṛunī  
 uyarndōr ulagam eydip piṇṇum  
 oḷitta tāyum avarkkurit taṇṇē  
 adanāl aṇṇādādalu marivōy naṇṇum  
 iṇṇum kēṇmadi isai veyyōyē!  
 niṇra tuppoḍu niṇkurit telunda  
 eṇṇil kāṭci ilaiyōr tōṇṇiṇ  
 niṇperuṇ celvam yārkum eṇcuvaiyē  
 amarveṇ celvanī avarkku ulaiyiṇ  
 iḡaḷunar uvappap paḷiyēṇ cuvaiyē  
 adaṇāl oḷigadil Attaiṇiṇ maraṇē valviraindu  
 eḷumadi vāḷgaṇiṇ uḷḷam aḷindōrkku  
 ēmamāḡum niṇtāl niḷal mayaṅḡādu  
 ceydal vēṇḍumāl naṇṇō vāṇōr  
 arumperal ulagat tāṇṇavar  
 vidumburu viruppoḍu virundedir koḷarḡkē!  
 (Pullāṇṇūr Eyirriyaṇṇar sang to Kōpperuṇcōḷaṇ,  
 Puṇaṇṇūru 213)

30. Vaidehi, *Purananuru* 201–250 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-201-250>>
31. irumpaṇai veṇtōḍu malaindō ṇallaṇ  
 karuṇciṇai vēmbiṇ teriyalō ṇallaṇ  
 niṇṇakaṇṇiyu mārmidain danṇē niṇṇnoḍu  
 poruvōṇ kaṇṇiyu mārmidain danṇē  
 oruvīr tōṇṇiṇ tōṇpanum kuḍiyē  
 iruvīr vēḷaliyar kaiyumaṇṇē adaṇāl  
 kuḍipporu ḷaṇṇunum ceydi koḍittēr  
 nummō raṇṇa vēndarkku  
 meymmalī yuvagai ceyyumiv vigalē.  
 (Kōvūr Kilār to Neḷuṇkilḷi and Nalaṇkilḷi, *Puṇaṇṇūru* 45)
32. nīyē puṇaviṇ allalaṇṇiyum piṇṇavum  
 iḍukkaṇ palavum viḍuttōṇ marugaṇai  
 ivarēpulaṇuḷu duṇmār puṇkaṇaṇcit  
 tamadupaḡut tuṇṇum taṇṇiḷal vāḷnar

*kaḷiṟukaṇ ḍaḷūum aḷāal maṟanda  
 puṇṭalaic ciṟāar maṇṟumarunḍu nōkki  
 virundiṟ puṇkaṇō vuḍaiyar  
 kēṭṭaṇai yāyiṇī vēṭṭadu ceymmē.  
 (Kōvūr Kiḷār to Kiḷḷi Vaḷavaṇ, *Puranāṇūru* 46)*

33. *vaḷḷiyōrp paḍarndu puḷḷin pōgi  
 neḍiya eṇṇādu curampala kaḍandu  
 vaḍiyā nāviṇ vallāṅgup pāḍip  
 perradu magiḷndum cuṟram arutti  
 ōmbādu uṇḍu kūmbādu vīci  
 varisaikku varundu miṇṇaricil vāḷkkai  
 piṟarkkut tīḍaṟindaṇṟō iṇṟē tiṟappaḍa  
 naṇṇār nāṇa aṇṇāndu ēgi  
 āṇḍiṇidu oḷugiṇ alladu ōṇḍupugaḷ  
 maṇṇāḷ celvam eydiya  
 nummōr aṇṇa cemmaḷum uḍaitṭē.  
 (Kōvūr Kiḷār to Neḍuṇkiḷḷi, *Puranāṇūru* 47)*
34. Vaidehi, *Purananuru* 1–50 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
 <<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-1-50>>



### III

#### **Birds and Beasts: Codes/Symbols in the Scheme of Sangam Love Poems\***

Present-day man has become absolute mechanical and obsessed with material gratification. Up till the period of industrialization, evidently he lived ‘the natural life’. Despite facing serious threats all the while, perhaps danger every minute, yet the erstwhile man’s life was in nature and the nature was in his life. His ‘*interior feelings*’ and ‘*exterior actions*’ were indeed ostensibly governed by the natural environment wherein we find a variety of insects, amphibians, crustaceans, reptiles, mammals, birds and animals<sup>1</sup>. The creatures of soft and wild nature were brought into relationship with mankind by the poets of Sangam Age (c. 300 B.C.–A.D. 250) to convey the nuances of human feelings of love such as excitement, ecstasy, anxiety, separation, sulking, solitude, sorrow, etc. Living beings are portrayed in Sangam poems not as isolated elements but as their integral parts to reveal “the interior landscape” so aesthetically. An abundance of descriptions, similes, metaphors, ‘implied metaphors’ or ‘insets’ (*uḷḷurāi uvamams*), and ‘hidden meanings’ (*iraiccis*) that involve ‘*the interior feelings*’ and ‘*the exterior actions*’ of birds and animals are extensively employed as symbols/codes in *akam* (= love) poems of Tamil Sangam Literature to express deeper

meaning of the subtle love feelings of humankind viz. *puṇardal* (sexual union), *iruttal* (patient waiting), *ūḍal* (sulking), *iraṅgal* (anxious waiting) and *piridal* (separation). Often, ‘*akam* poems tend to hinge around one or more images, exploiting the complex suggestion of images to the full’ (Hart 1979: 3). However, the present paper can deal only with a selection of themes with regard to the main *akam* landscapes and more details may be discussed on a latter occasion as the genre deserves it.

### **Birds and Beasts Found in Five Landscapes:**

Classical Tamil love poetry artistically portrays human love experiences in specific habitats loaded with natural background. Every situation in the poems is described using themes in which the time, the place and the floral symbols of each episode are codified. These codifications are used as symbols to imply a socio-economic order, occupations and behaviour patterns, which in turn are symbolized, by specific flora and fauna.

Love in Sangam poems was dealt with in five *tiṇais*, viz. *kuṛiñci*, *mullai*, *marudam*, *neydal* and *pālai* – the five landscapes (regions) that are named after plants in the tract of land that they grow in. Each *tiṇai* pertains to a particular region with its own suitable season and appropriate hour of the day and its flora and fauna and characteristic environment. The aspect of love is called the ‘*uripporuḷ*’, i.e. ‘the subject matter of the *tiṇai*’; ‘the region, the season and the hour’ are called the ‘*mudal poruḷ*’, i.e. ‘the basic material’; ‘objects in the environment’ are denoted as ‘*karupporuḷ*’.

*Kuṛiñci-tiṇai*, the clandestine union of the lovers is characteristic of the mountainous region; *mullai-tiṇai*, the life at home spent in expectation of the return of the hero is set against the background of the forest region; *marudam-tiṇai*, the sulky life

has agricultural region as its background; *neydal-tiṇai*, the life of despair is characteristic of the sea coast; *pālai-tiṇai*, the life of desolation in separation is depicted in arid landscape. Besides these five *tiṇais*, there are two non-geographical modes which also deal with human emotions viz. '*kaikkiḷai*' and '*peruntiṇai*'. Since the love themes of these two *tiṇais* were unnatural and inappropriate, they were not associated with any specific landscape. *Kaikkiḷai* deals with 'unreciprocated' or 'one-sided love' whereas *peruntiṇai* deals with 'improper love' or 'love against the rules of custom'.

### ***Kuṛiñci* – Mountainous Region:**

*Kuṛiñci*, the *tiṇai* representing a mountain region, speculates on the 'Union of Lovers' at midnight. It is originally the name of the famous flower '*Strobilanthes kunthiana*' growing in the mountain region. The '*Strobilanthes*' (a shrub whose brilliant white or blue flowers blossom for only a few days once in every twelve years) is symbolic in indicating the 'blossom of the feminine senses ready to become united with the male physically and spiritually'.

*Vaṇḍu* (beetle), *curumbu* (honey bee), *ñimiṟu* (honey bee), *tumbi* (denoting both honey bee and dragon fly), *kīḷi* (parrot), *maññai/mayil* (denoting both peahen and peacock), *pāmbu* (snake), *kuraṅgu* (monkey), *mandi* (female monkey), *kaḍuvaṇ* (male monkey), *paṇṇi* (wild pigs), *varaiyāḍu* (mountain goat/sheep), *āmāṇ* (wild bull), *eṅgu* (bear), *yāṇai* (elephant), *puli* (tiger) etc. are the birds and beasts of the *kuṛiñci* region which is filled with bamboos, jack fruit and *vēṅgai* trees. The occupants of mountain region are tribal people who hunt and gather honey. The place is cool with water in abundance and represents the midnight hour of a day.



The poems of *kuṛiñci-tiṇai* describe the clandestine love affair of young girls. A heroine in *Kuṛuntogai* (*KṚT*) anthology, who is so happy about her bosom relationship with a young man, delightfully declares:

*nilattiṇum peridē vāṇiṇum uyarndanru*  
*nīriṇum āraḷa viṇṇē cāral*  
*karuṅkōṛ kuṛiñcip pūkkonḍu*  
*peruntēṇ iḷaikkum nāḍaṇoḍu naṭpē.*  
 (Dēvakulattār, *KṚT*. 3)

Bigger than earth, certainly,  
 higher than the sky,  
 more unfathomable than the waters  
 is this love for this man

of the mountain slopes  
 where bees make rich honey  
 from the flowers of the *kuṛiñci*  
 that has such black stalks.

(*KṚT*. 3, Tr. A.K. Ramanujan, 1985: 5)

The *kuṛiñci* poem cited above does not describe the lovers' union explicitly but does so implicitly. As observed by A.K. Ramanujan (1985: 244), "the union is not described or talked about; it is enacted by the "inset" scene of the bees making honey from the flowers of the *kuṛiñci*". The implied meaning is that the mountain owned by her man was the most preferred location for young men to have sex with their sweethearts. Here *kuṛiñci* flowers in connotation signify young girls; honey bees young men; and making of rich honey by the insects denotes young men and women indulging in merrymaking sexual acts. It may be noted here that often women especially teenage girls are

denoted as ‘flowers’ whereas men, especially teenage boys, are symbolized by ‘honeybees’. In the poem, her lover is not only the lord of the mountain; he is like the mountain he owns. This technique of using the scene to describe an act or agent in Tamil is known by the grammatical term ‘*uḷḷurai uvamam*’, ‘hidden’ or ‘implicit metaphor’.

As rightly observed by George L. Hart III (1979: 6):

The Tamils were and are an agricultural people, and for them fertility is the most important aspect of human existence. In *kuṛiñci*, the most important human relation – that between man and woman with its promise of offspring – has been initiated, but has not yet been controlled and ordered by marriage.

Thus, the secret union of the *kuṛiñci* poem is pervaded by a sense of imminent danger – if the hero delays marrying his beloved for some reason or other. In the majority of the *kuṛiñci* poems, the dangerous aspect of secret love (i.e. gossiping about the modesty or chastity of heroine) is more realistically described mostly by *tōḷi* (*sakhi* in Sanskrit, the companion or female friend of the heroine) and sometimes by the heroine herself. In *Kuruntogai* 38, the heroine describes in anguished tones her lover’s callousness/insensitive attitude of delaying the marriage with her.

*kāṇa mañṇai araiyīṇ muṭṭai*  
*veyilāḍu mucuviṇ kuruḷai uruṭṭum*  
*kuṇra nāḍaṇ kēṇmai eṇrum*  
*naṇṇumaṇ vāḷi tōḷi uṇkaṇ*  
*nīroḍo rāṅgut taṇappa*  
*uḷḷā dagaṛal vullu vōrkke.*  
 (Kabilar, *KRT*. 38)

He is from those mountains

where the little black-faced monkey,  
 playing in the sun,  
 rolls the wild peacock's eggs  
 on the rocks.

Yes, his love is always good  
 as you say, my friend,  
 but only for those strong enough  
 to bear it.

who will not cry their eyes out  
 or think anything of it

when he leaves.

(*KRT*. 38, Tr. A.K. Ramanujan, 1985: 25)

The poem reveals the mental agony of the heroine (who is yet to be married to her lover) to her friend. Evidently, she is not pessimistic about the intentions behind her lover's attitude. But by describing the aforesaid analogy about his mountain region, the heroine apparently reveals the insensitive attitude of the lover on the wedding issue. She suggestively refers 'the hero' to the 'black-faced male monkey' and 'herself' to 'an egg laid by a peahen' on the rocks. The hero from the mountain region (*kurin̄ci*) somehow develops and manages an intimate relationship with a girl of his region. 'The monkey symbolizing the hero keeps playing with the egg of peahen' (i.e. the heroine) for days in bright sun-light and wishes to continue without showing any concern for the egg, i.e. 'the heroine'. Without really thinking about it, he delays the marriage. Thereby he gives room for others to gossip about their relationship. It becomes a problem to what extent her position appears to be ignominious. So the

heroine ponders over his attitude. Though his love is loyal, he lacks sensitivity. Sometimes, he is not seen for days. Thereby, it becomes the serious matter of worry for the heroine who is charged emotionally over him. “I survive since I am strong enough and hopeful”, so says the heroine.

Monkeys usually mishandle anything; play mischievously with the things that they acquired and disfigure them by their merrymaking mood. “Like a garland in the hands of a monkey”, thus a proverb in Tamil chronicles about the insensitive attitude of the monkey. Here in the poem, the ‘not-so-handsome man’ from a mountain region somehow manages to secure a bosom relationship with the beautiful girl of his region. Peacocks (*maññai/mayil*)<sup>2</sup> are known for their ever attractive, quite charming and delightful beauty. When a monkey manages to obtain an egg of peahen, needless to say, it cannot handle it with care. Nevertheless, the monkey enjoys it at any cost by playing with the egg. It cannot realize the danger involved with the egg when it plays. The monkey is a wild animal and insensitive whereas the egg is a so-delicate/so-sophisticated substance carrying the soul/life force to be born sooner or later. When the ‘shell of the egg’ (read here the physical body of the heroine) is in danger of being mishandled, the same could be expected to happen to the ‘life force’ (chastity) of the heroine sooner or later.

### ***Mullai* – Forest/Pasture Landscape:**

*Mullai*, the *tiṇai* representing the forest region, speculates about the patient waiting of a wife for her husband at evening time. It is the name of the specific flower of the forest region ‘jasmine’ (*Jasminum auriculatum*). The flower, growing abundantly on forest cum pasture land, symbolically represents ‘the married woman’. Its ‘white colour and exceptional fragrance’ signify ‘the

pure' and 'blissful' life of married women'. No doubt, *mullai* is a theme wholly concerned with fertility. The ideal family life led by man and woman duly holds out promise for their offspring in due course.

*Cēval* (wild fowl), *maññai* (denoting both forest peahen/peacock), *ā* (cow), *āḍu* (goat/sheep), *kaṇru* (calf), *mān* (deer), *iralai* (male deer), *muyal* (rabbit) etc. are the birds and beasts of the *mullai* region which is filled with rich lakes, waterfalls, teak, bamboo, sandalwood trees. In this region, millet grows abundantly and wild bees are a source of honey.

Often, *mullai* poems give vent to the worry of a wife who patiently waits for the arrival of her husband. Occasionally, the poems do sketch the kind-hearted heroes who return to their homes after completing a mission successfully. In a *mullai* poem, a hero who is much charged emotionally over his wife is returning through a forest/pasture landscape. Though he is very eager to reach his home at the earliest opportunity to make himself and his beloved wife happy, on his way back he advises his charioteer to slow down the chariot. Why does he say so? Let us see the following *Akanānūru* (ANU) poem:

*vāṇam vāyppak kaviṇik kāṇam*  
*kamañ cūlmāmaḷai kārpayandu irutteṇa*  
*maṇimarul pūvai aṇimalar iḍaiyiḍaic*  
*cempura mūdāy parattaliṇ naṇpala*  
*mullai vīkaḷal tāay vallōṇ*  
*ceygai yaṇṇa cennilap puraviṇ*  
*vāap pāṇi vayaṅgutoliṇ kalimāt*  
*tāat tāḷiṇai mella oduṅga*  
*iḍimarandu ēmadi vaḷava kuvimugai*  
*vāḷai vāṇpū ūḷurubu udirnda*  
*olīkulai yaṇṇa tirimaruppu ērroḍu*  
*kaṇaikkāl ampīṇaik kāmar puṇarnilai*  
*kaḍumāṇ tēroli kētpiṇ*  
*naḍunāl kūṭṭam āgalum uṇḍē*  
 (Cittalai Cāttaṇār, ANU. 134)

Rains in season,  
Forests grow beautiful.  
Black pregnant clouds  
bring flower and blue-gem  
flower on the bilberry tree  
the red-backed moths multiply,  
and fallen jasmines  
cover the ground.

It looks like  
a skilled man's work of art,  
this jasmine country.  
Friend, drive softly here.  
Put aside the whip for now.  
Slow down  
these leaping pairs of legs,  
these majestic horses  
galloping in style  
as if to music.

Think of the stag, his twisted antlers  
like banana stems  
after the clustering bud  
and the one big blossom  
have dropped,

think of the lovely bamboo-legged doe  
ready in desire:

if they hear the clatter  
of horse and chariot,  
how can they mate  
at their usual dead of night?

(ANU. 134, Tr. A.K. Ramanujan, 1985: 76–77)

*Mullai*, being the region adjoining the fertile cultivable land, becomes bedecked in the rainy season with a variety of flowers which are full of fragrance. During the season, bees and birds used to throng over *mullai* region as people assemble at a place where a carnival is taking place. When bullocks pulling carts or horses pulling chariots return to their respective sheds after carrying out their day's work in the evening, they obviously speed up their run without whips. Here in the poem 'the hero' is the signifier signified by 'horses'. And his 'emotionally charged mind' is signified by 'the galloping speed of horses'. As we know, as such 'horses usually symbolise the man of strength who is also sexually active and strong'. A hero instructing the charioteer to slow down the speed of galloping horses implicitly means that he was making his emotionally charged mind quiet for some time. His sentimental empathy with the stag and the doe will obviously delay his home-coming and thereby will prolong the suffering of his wife at home. But it is a noble feature of the ideal family life where everyone is supposed to have sympathy for all living beings. That is how in the poem, 'Nature' is brought into relationship with man, furnishing lessons and analogies to human conduct and human aspirations.

Quite evidently, the mood of *mullai* is one of fertility, mirrored by the greening of the woodland meadows in the monsoon after the summer. Some poems celebrate the union between man and woman (*Aiṅkuṟunūru* 411); others describe the despair of the heroine, separated from her lover when all that surrounds her reminds her of that union. In *Kuṟuntogai* 190, the heroine shares her anguish/despondency with her *tōḷi* in the absence of the hero who assured her that he will soon return from his journey:

*neṛiyirun̄ kaduppoḍu peruntōḷ n̄vic*  
*ceṛivaḷai negiḷac ceyporuṭka gaṇṇōr*  
*aṛivarkol vāḷi tōḷi poṛivari*  
*veñciṇa araviṇ paintalai tumiya*  
*uravurum uraṛum araiyirul̄ naḍunāl̄*  
*nallē ṛiyaṅgutō ṛiyambum*  
*pallāṇ toḷuvat torumaṇik kuralē*  
 (Bhūdampulavaṇār, *KRT*. 190)

May you live long, my friend!  
 Will he who stroked my thick,  
 black hair and wide shoulders,  
 and caused my stacked bangles  
 to slip off  
 as he departed to earn wealth,  
 hear  
 the tinkling of a single bell  
 whenever a fine bull,  
 in a stable with many cows, moves  
 in the middle of the night  
 when thunder rumbles, cutting  
 off the green heads of snakes.  
 (*KRT*. 190, Tr. Vaidehi)<sup>3</sup>

The hero, without marrying his beloved, has set off to a foreign country to gain wealth. He has promised to return by the monsoon, a time when travelling is difficult. The monsoon has arrived but not the husband, as he assured his beloved he would. The wife, who could not see him in person and missing him emotionally too, remembered the blissful days that she had earlier with him. As she is dried up passionately and unable to sleep during the nights of the monsoon period, the wife wonders whether her husband is aware of the arrival of the rainy season here in her place. She expresses her grief of loneliness to her friend, which may be paraphrased in the following manner:



Is my husband aware of the prevailing rainy season here wherein I am suffering? In the middle of the nights of the rainy season when thunder is often pealing, a fine bull, stabled with many cows at our shed, moves here and there. Thereby the single bell tied to its neck tinkles incessantly. Also the snakes have lost their tendered heads on hearing the rumbling sound of the thunder. So I am shaken and sleepless for nights.

The heroine simultaneously elucidates the two different attitude of her husband. Before setting off to a foreign country, more often than not, the husband stroked her thick black hair and wide shoulders passionately. Thereby, he gave her opportunity many times to experience the blissful part of the conjugal life. In his absence due to the state of loneliness, the wife became dejected, thin and pale, causing even the bangles to slip off from her arms. She suggestively expresses that she is not in a position to withstand anymore the rainy season that arrived with roaring thunder which troubles her to a great extent psychologically and sensually. In a way, 'the frightened bull and snake' seem to be symbolically referring to 'the heroine who is also equally frightened by the roaring sound of thunder'. So she seeks the broad shoulders of her husband to feel the sense of safety as well as to have the sensual enjoyment of his solace.

### ***Marudam* – Cultivable Landscape:**

*Marudam*, the *tiṇai* representing agricultural pasture landscape, speculates on verbal and mental conflicts that take place between wife and husband (due to the infidelity of the latter towards the former) at early morning hours before sunrise. It is named after the tree 'Black winged myrobalan'/'*Terminalia arjuna*' (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*). It is a fertile, watery countryside. The hero of crop landscape enjoying life in abundance with plentiful

resources often maintains extramarital relationship with younger and beautiful woman. *Marudam* poems often portray the scene of triangular love plots in which the hero's visits to the concubine/harlot/whore oblige the heroine to counter with a mixed show of coquetry and sulking.

*Mīṇ* (fresh water fish), *āmai* (tortoise), *nīrnāy* (otter), *kuruvi* (sparrow), *kōli* (hen), *cēval* (cock/fowl), *kokku* (heron), *kārāṇ*, *erumai* (both the terms mean buffalo), *mudalai* (crocodile), *kaḷavaṇ* (crab) etc., are the birds and beasts of the *marudam* tract which is filled with ponds brimming with water, and plantain, sugarcane plants and tress such as *marudam*, mango, and neem.

Often, in the love poems of *marudam-tiṇai*, 'Nature' is used in allegories called '*uḷḷurai uvamam*' or 'the implied simile'. All the objects of 'Nature' and their activities stand for the hero, the heroine and others and their activities in the drama of love. The latter are not at all mentioned but only suggested through the former. It is 'simile incognito' which leaves it to the reader to discover it. For instance, let us see a wonderful sketching of *marudam-tiṇai* poem from *Akanānūru*.

*cēṛṛunilai muṇaiyiya ceṇkaṭ kārāṇ*  
*ūrmaḍi kaṅgulil nōṇṭalāi parindu*  
*kūrmuḷ vēli kōṭṭiṇ nīkki*  
*nīrmudir paḷanattu mīṇuḍaṇ iriya*  
*antūmbu vaḷḷai mayakkitt tāmarai*  
*vaṇḍūdu paṇimalar arum ūra!*  
*yārai yōnir pulakkēm vāruṛru*  
*uraiyirandu oḷirum tāḷirum kūndal,*  
*piṛarumor uttiyai nammaṇait tandu,*  
*vaduvai ayaṇḍaṇai eṇba aḥḍiyām*  
*kūrēm vāḷiyar endai! ceṛunar*  
*kaḷiṛuḍai aruṇcamam tadaiya nūrum*  
*oḷiruvāḷ tāṇaik korṛac ceḷiyaṇ*  
*piṇḍa nelliṇ aḷḷūr aṇṇaveṇ*

*oṇtoḍi ñegilīṇum ñegilga*  
*ceṇṛī peruma! nīrragaikkunar yārō?*  
 (Aḷḷūr Naṇmullaiyār, *ANU*. 46)

O man from the town, where  
 hating to stand in the mud,  
 a red-eyed buffalo tied to  
 a strong rope broke loose,  
 lifted a sharp thorn fence,  
 jumped into a pond with  
 stagnant water, caused fish  
 to dart away and *vallai* vines  
 with beautiful hollow stems  
 to get tangled,  
 and ate the watery lotus flowers  
 on which bees were swarming!  
 Who are you to us to quarrel?

They say that you brought someone  
 with dark, hanging hair like flowing  
 water into our house and married her.  
 We did not say that.

May you live, long my lord!  
 If my bangles that are bright like Allūr,  
 rich in paddy, owned by victorious king  
 Chelīyaṇ who won difficult battles against  
 enemies with elephants and crushed them  
 with his bright swords, slip, let them slip.  
 Lord! You can go where you want to go!  
 Who is there to stop you?  
 (*ANU*. 46, Tr. Vaidehi)<sup>4</sup>

One wife just wished to scorn implicitly the infidelity of her husband who had been unfaithful to her for some time. So she suggestively ‘hailed’ the country of her lord:

Oh lord of the fertile land! I am no body to sulk with you? You know, a robust buffalo of your country in the middle of the night left its shed clandestinely by snapping its rope. It removed the sharp thorny fence with its horns and went away from its shed. By daunting steps that scattered fishes hither and thither, they kept roaming in the watery field. Then, quietly it entered into a lotus tank located on the outskirts. There upon, it squeezed the *vaḷḷai* creepers. And blissfully it chewed lotus flowers that honey bees were flocking to. I did not but others say that you brought a young beautiful woman of long tresses to our home only to wed her. Long live my lord! Let my bangles be slip away from my arms in the way the resourceful *Aḷḷūr* of Pāṇḍiya Kingdom once got reduced to penury.

Thus, the wife described ‘the clandestine character of the buffalo’ by which sarcastically she pointed out ‘the infidelity of her husband’ who just returned from a brothel in the early morning. She discreetly made him to know that she was in fact aware of his infidelity, of his loose morals, of pleasing the harlot’s parents and relatives and of returning home at dawn for a formal stay. Here, ‘the buffalo’ eventually stands for ‘the hero’, ‘the fishes’ for ‘the village people’, ‘the *vaḷḷai* creepers’ for ‘her parents’ and ‘the lotus’ for ‘the harlot’.

In such descriptions, the speaker hesitates to express certain things openly but desires to dwell on each detail in a wordy caricature of a familiar incident in ‘Nature’ and through it more effectively conveys to the listener all the feelings and thoughts. More or less in a similar line to the above discussed poem, another heroine from *marudam* region points out the infidelity of her husband by using the same analogy. Again in this poem too, the buffalo with the same characteristics finds its place as the symbol/code to refer to the hero.

The hero, tired of his wife, has begun to visit a harlot who is more accomplished in terms of beauty. Forgetting his wife and

child he roams around the place where the harlot lives. Consequent upon his improper attitude, his wife becomes very distressed. Finally, one day her husband does return to the home. However, the heroine not diminished her sulking over him. Thereby, the husband seeks the help of her *tōli* to pacify her anger. The *tōli* earnestly advises the heroine to forgive her husband in the interest of family life. Let us see how the following poem describes the clandestine attitude of the hero:

*tuṛaimīṇ vaḷaṅgum perunīrp poygai*  
*arimalar āmbal mēynda nerimaruppu*  
*īrntaṇ erumaic cuvalpaḍu mudupōttut*  
*tūṅgu cēṛraḷḷal tuṇcip poḷudupaḍap*  
*painniṇa varāal kuṛaiyap peyartandu*  
*kurūukkoḍip pagaṇṇrai cūdi mūdūrp*  
*pōrcceṛi maḷḷarir pugutarum ūraṇ*  
*tērtara vanda teriyīlai negiltōḷ*  
*ūrkoḷ kallā magaḷir tarattarap*  
*parattaimai tāṅgalō ilaṇeṇa vaṛidunī*  
*pulattal ollumō? maṇaikeḷu maḍandai*  
*adupulan dūraidal valli yōrē*  
*ceyyōḷ nīṅgac cilpadaṇ goḷittut*  
*tāmaṭ tuṇḍu tamiya rāgit*  
*tēmoḷip pudalvar tiraṅgumulai cuvaippa*  
*vaiguṇar āgudal aṛindum*  
*aṛiyār amma-ahdu uḍalu mōrē!*  
 (Ōrampōgiyār, ANU. 316)

In his town,  
 an old buffalo, his back wet and cool, his horns curved,  
 grazes on bright-flowered lilies  
 in a pond full of water and fish  
 sleeps all night in the oozing mud,  
 and then when dawn comes  
 walks out, crushing murrel fish with their

fresh-smelling fat, drapes himself  
 with bright *pakanrai* creepers,  
 and enters the ancient town  
 like a warrior victorious in battle.

Tell me, woman of the house,  
 why are you angry with your man?  
 Why do you say,  
 “He brings women in his chariot,  
 their ornaments exquisite,  
 their arms thin with desire for him,  
 so many the city cannot hold them all,  
 and they offer themselves to him again and again.  
 How can he bear living such a life?”

Surely a wife is foolish to show  
 such anger even though she knows  
 that woman strong enough to quarrel and live apart  
 must do without the goddess of prosperity,  
 must sift the stones from a small portion of rice,  
 cook it, and eat alone,  
 must suffer their sweet-voiced children  
 to suck their dried-up breasts.  
 (ANU. 316, Tr. George L. Hart, 1979: 129)

This is the *marudam* poem sketching aesthetically about a universal ever existing social problem of unfaithfulness of men towards their wives. It is delivered through the mouth of *tōli* who reasons to the heroine that she should forgive her unfaithful husband in the interests of herself and her child. We could paraphrase the arguments through which the *tōli* expresses her concern to the heroine in the following manner:

My dear friend, you know, in our Lord's town, an old buffalo whose back is still wet and cool yet wishes to graze on newly blossomed lilies in a pond full of water and fish. It sleeps the entire

night in the oozing mud without any hitch. Prior to the sun rise, it walks out of the pond crushing murrel fish of fresh-smelling fat. It enters our ancient town like a warrior victorious in battle by draping itself with dazzling *paganrai* creepers on its head. Tell me, why are you angry with your man? Why do you say: "He brings women accomplished in beauty and decked with ornaments in his chariot? Plenty of such women are living in our town who desire and voluntarily offer themselves to him. How can he bear living such a life?" It is not wise for a woman to quarrel even with her unfaithful husband who is the source of her prosperity, though she is strong enough to live apart without him. Otherwise, she would suffer alone in pathetic poverty where children even go without milk to suck from their mothers' dried-up breasts.

Thus, the friend advises rather admonishes the heroine to forget and forgive her husband wholly for the sake of her family. We could say that the poem apparently advocates the worthy family life in which women are always propelled to adjust to their husbands (even to crooks, ruffians, criminals, psychologically disturbed men etc., simply they are their husbands) and compelled to sacrifice their individuality, liberty and inner space purely in the interest of their husbands and children.

The buffalo, signifying the unfaithful husband of the heroine, is compared to a fighting man, who returns covered with gore from battle and decked out with the garlands of victory. The comparison is ironic, for the buffalo is meant to be likened to the hero. "By saying that in his town, a buffalo grazes on lilies in the tank, sleeps in the mud, and then at dawn destroys murrel fish, drapes himself with *pakanrai*, and enters the ancient town like a warrior, (the poet means) that the hero enjoys the harlots in that quarter (of town), spends the entire night in that base pleasure, and in the morning leaves, making his reputation small and causing much gossip" (Hart 1979: 130–31).

‘The bright-flowered lilies’ mean here ‘the beautiful and decorated young harlots’. ‘The buffalo oozing in the mud throughout night’ suggestively refers to ‘the hero spending the whole night shamelessly in a harlot’s place’. ‘The buffalo draped in *paganrai* creepers on its neck’ meant to be likened ‘to the remaining signs of the hero’s sleeping with the harlot in her colony’. ‘The crushed murrel fish of smelling fat’ becomes ‘the image for the fresh young harlots’ who have failed to sleep with the hero until then.

### ***Neydal* – Seashore Region:**

*Neydal*, the *tiṇai* representing seashore region, speculates on the anxious waiting of the heroine who is pondering in the afternoon hours before the sunset either in a premarital or post-marital love situation due to the non-arrival of her hero at the stipulated time. The region named after the flower ‘Water lily’ (*Nymphaea-stellata*) describes the pangs of separation of the lovers in the background of seashore.

*Mīṇ* (sea fish), *ciral* (kingfisher), *curā* (shark), *irāl* (shrimp), *anril* (an unidentified seashore bird perhaps the legendary ‘lovebirds’), *kurugu* (heron), *nārai* (crane), *aṇṇam* (swan), *alavaṇ* (crab), *āmai* (tortoise), *mudalai* (crocodile) etc. are the birds and beasts of the *neydal* tract which is filled with sandy soil and the flowers such as *āmbal* (White lily – *Nymphaea lotus alba*), *kuṇḷai* (Blue Nelumbo – *Pontederia monochoria vaginalis*), creepers/plants such as *tālai* (Screwpine – *Pandanus odoritissimus*), climber, *kaidai* (Fragrant screwpine, *Pandanus odoratissimus*), *ñālāl* (Orange cupcalyxed brasiletto), and trees such as *punṇai* (Mast-wood, *Calophyllum inophyllum*) etc.

Sangam poets portrayed skilfully the pangs of separation of *neydal* heroines in numerous poems. The *neydal* heroine feels



utterly sad either over the failed or delayed return of her lover (in clandestine love) or husband (in post-marital life) who left her and went on to an alien country to become either educated or to prosper in conducting some business or to take part in war defending his land. On his separation, the heroine becomes so anguished/tormented due to social stigma and of course to loneliness. Her sufferings and pangs have no bounds after the sunset, especially at midnight. Here in the following *neydal* poem (*Narriṇai* (*NRI*) 303), the heroine shares her anguish, anxiety and agony with her *tōli*, the friend.

*oliyavindu aḍaṅgi yāmam naḷḷeṇa*  
*kalikeḷu pākkam tuyilmaḍin danrē!*  
*tonṇururai kaḍavuḷ cērnda parārai*  
*maṇrap peṇṇai vāṅgumaḍar kuḍambait*  
*tuṇaipuṇar aṇril uyavukkural kēṭṭorum*  
*tuñcāk kaṇṇaḷ tuyaraḍac cāay*  
*namvayin varundum naṇṇudal eṇbadu*  
*uṇḍukol vāḷi tōli! teṇkaḍal*  
*vaṇkaip paraḍavar iṭṭa ceṇkōl*  
*koḍumuḍi avvalai pariyap pōkki*  
*kaḍumuraṇ ericurā vaḷaṅgum*  
*neḍunīrc cērppantaṇ neñcat tāṇē!*  
 (Madurai Ārulaviyanāṭṭu Ālampēri Cāṭṭaṇār, *NRI*. 303)

It is midnight.  
 Its noise stilled,  
 the boisterous town is quiet in sleep.  
 Again and again I hear  
 the yearning cry of the pair of *aṇril* birds  
 from their nest in the crooked spathe  
 of the huge-trunked palmyra in the courtyard,  
 a place long haunted by a god,  
 and my eyes do not close in sleep  
 and I seem to grow thin from the pain I feel.

Does he know his lovely-faced woman suffers  
 because of him, friend,  
 he from a village by the deep-water ocean,  
 where a killer shark roams, filled with hate  
 after tearing his way through a net  
 of curved knots and straight sticks  
 thrown by the strong-handed fishermen in the clear sea?  
 (NRI. 303, Tr. George L. Hart, 1979: 93)

The poem so vividly portrays the compelling charm of the *neydal* region in which the heroine suffers from her loneliness. From behind the conventional symbolization of anxious waiting, there emerges a picture of the stillness of seashore region where at midnight the yearning cry of the pair of *anril* birds (unidentified seashore birds perhaps the legendary ‘the love-birds’) adds fuel to her loneliness. Here, ‘the single *anril* bird of the pair’ signifies ‘the heroine’ who is suffering most from separation from her lover. ‘The roaming shark which tears the nets of fishermen’ can be taken as a symbolic outlet of ‘the heartless gossiping nature of village people’, who ridicule her severely despite her being well-protected by her parents.

The foremost mood of the *neydal tiṇai* is deeper and more pathetic than any other *tiṇai* – a woman has given herself to a man, and unless he marries her she is ruined. In many *neydal* poems, the lover has abandoned his beloved, leaving her alone to suffer in distress. Often, she is distraught because of gossip about her affair with a man who does not seem to care for her. See how a heroine here expresses her grief to her friend.

*ilaṅguṭalai ṇeḡiḷac cāay yāṇē*  
*uḷēṇē vāḷi tōḷi cāral*  
*taḷaiyaṇi alḡulmagāḷi ruḷḷum*  
*viḷavumēm baṭṭaveṇ nalanē paḷaviṛar*  
*paṛaivalan tappiya paidal nārai*

*tiraitōy vāṅguciṇai yirukkum*  
*taṇṇan turaivaṇoḍu kaṇmā riṇṇē.*  
 (Ammuvaṇār, *KRT*. 125)

May you live long, my friend!  
 My festival-like virtue  
     that excelled that of women  
     wearing on their loins  
     clothing made from  
     the trees on the slopes,  
 has gone away with the lord  
 of the shores,  
 where an old white stork  
 who has lost his wing strength  
 sits on a bent tree branch  
 that is soaking in the waves.  
 I am wasting away; my bright bangles  
 have slipped; and I am still alive.  
 (*KRT*. 125, Tr. Vaidehi)<sup>5</sup>

The heroine had given her noble virtue gracefully to a man from coast by having an intimate affair with him. After sometime, the man parted from her to alien country, seeking a better livelihood. He has not returned to her for quite some time. Thereby, the heroine became depressed and disillusioned. She lost her charming youth and became weak too. Even the bangles have slipped away from her arms. But still she is alive since she is hopeful of her man's returning back. Here, the heroine describes her pathetic condition by employing an analogy wherein she suggestively refers to herself to an old white stork which has lost its capacity to fly up any more to anywhere, but still sits on a bent tree branch that is soaking slowly in the ocean waves.

In the image ‘the stork’ symbolizes ‘the heroine’ and its ‘white colour’ signifies ‘her noble virtue’ or ‘chastity’. The *uḷḷurai uvamam* is that like the stork which has lost its feathers and is unable to fly, the heroine has lost her virtue and strength and is struggling to live. ‘The bent tree branch’ refers to ‘the heroine’s hometown’ which is not sympathetic to her condition. ‘The waves of the ocean’ are ‘the gossip of people’, as suggestively implied here in the poem. The stork is hopeful that the waves will become still one day. So does the heroine hope that her man will return to her one day. That is why she is still alive.

### ***Pālai* – Desert Region/Wasteland Tract:**

*Pālai*, the *tiṇai* representing a desert region or parched wasteland area, speculates on separation which occurs when love is subject to external pressures that drive the lovers apart in the noon of the scorching summer, either in premarital or post-marital love situation. The region is named after the plant ‘Blue-dyeing rosebay’ or the tree ‘*Wrightia*’ (*Wrightia tinctoria*). The *pālai* or wasteland is not seen as being a naturally occurring ecological condition. It emerges when the adjoining areas of mountain and forest land tracts wither under the heat of the burning sun. Thus, it could be seen as a mixture of *mullai* and *kuṛiñci* landscapes, rather than as a mere sandy area. This landscape is associated with the theme of separation, which occurs when love is subject to external pressures that drive the lovers apart.

*Palli* (lizard), *ōdi* (chameleon/garden big lizard), *ōndi* (chameleon/garden big lizard), *purā* (pigeon), *kaḷugu* (eagle), *ceṇṇāy* (red fox), *yāṇai* (elephant), *puli* (tiger) etc., are the birds and beasts of the *pālai* region which is filled with sand and stones.

In *pālai*, man seems to be fighting against nature in its most unfertile manifestation. The hero usually undertakes the journey alone either to educate himself, or at the military assignment from his kingdom to wage wars with enemies, or to earn wealth in the interest of his family members' well-being. When the parents and brothers of the heroine are not in favour of their relationship, then both the hero and the heroine 'run away together' (*uḍaṇṇpōkku*, i.e. 'elopement') to an alien place and travel through the bone-dry wilderness that is filled with thieves and other hazards. The dangerous journeys undertaken by the hero individually as well as with his beloved through desert areas are vividly described in *pālai* poems. The obstacles and dangers either faced by himself or with his ladylove are also realistically portrayed. Let us see here how a heroine expresses her worry over the journey of her beloved in fearsome wild landscape:

*ceṇru nīḍuṇar allar avarvayiṇ  
 iṇaidal āṇāy eṇriciṇ iḡulai  
 ambutoḍai amaidi kāṇmār vambalar  
 kalaṇilar āyiṇum koṇru pulḷūṭṭum  
 kallā iḷaiyar kalitta kavalaik  
 kaṇanari iṇaṇoḍu kuḷi niṇaṇarundum  
 neyttōr āḍiya mallal mociviral  
 atta eruvaic cēval cērnda  
 araicēr yātta veṇtiraḷ viṇaiviraḷ  
 eḷāat tiṇitōḷ cōḷar perumagaṇ  
 viḷaṅgupugaḷ nīrutta iḷamperuṇ ceṇṇi  
 kuḍikkaḍaṇ āgaliṇ kuṇaivinaḷ muḍimār  
 cempuraḷ puricaip pāli nūri  
 vamba vaḍugar paintalai cavaṭṭik  
 koṇra yāṇaik kōṭṭiṇ tōṇrum  
 aṇcuvaru marabiṇ veṇcuram iṇandōr  
 nōyilar peyardal ariyiṇ  
 āḷala maṇṇō tōḷiyen kaṇṇē.  
 (Idaiyaṇ Cēndaṇkoṇraṇār, ANU. 375)*

“He will not stay away for long,  
 and yet you do not stop worrying,”  
 you say, friend.  
 In the hot, frightening wilderness he has entered,  
 wild young warriors whose shouts echo on forking paths  
 test their arrow shots,  
 killing travelers, even though they have no money,  
 and feed them to the birds.  
 There, while foxes move around them,  
 vultures eat fat,  
 their strong, close-set claws bloody  
 as they sit on a large-trunked *yā* tree,  
 on a branch as thick as the trunk of the elephant  
 that killed the northern newcomers,  
 crushing their soft heads,  
 when *Ḵamperuñcenni*, the Chola king,  
 whose thick arms always gain victory in battle,  
 sure in his shining fame,  
 crushed the fortress of *Pāḷi* with its coppery walls  
 to finish the work of his line.  
 Even though I know he will return safely,  
 my eyes, friend, refuse to stop crying.  
 (ANU. 375, Tr. George L. Hart, 1979: 134)

Thus, the heroine is seriously worried over the safety and well-being of her beloved who had already set foot in the wildest landscape in search of wealth. Here in the poem, wild young warriors (presumably thieves), vultures, foxes, wild elephants have been depicted as the life-endangering elements in order to portray the wild nature of the desert region, where men in ancient days went on either to educate themselves, or on a military assignment for their kingdoms to wage wars with enemies, or to earn wealth in the interest of their family members’ well-being as stated earlier. Except in a few poems, there was no description of the women accompanying their respective

beloveds in such wild regions for the reasons mentioned above. The heroine eloped with her lover and travelled to alien places only to lead a family life against the will of her parents and brothers. Most of the *pālai* poems quite naturally have depicted wild nature with the same life risking elements described in the above poem.

Contrary to the typical pattern of *pālai* poems, some heroes, either before or in the middle of their journey, leaving their lovers in suffering, used to remember their sweethearts and worry over their safety and well-being. For instance, a hero who is yet to travel in the narrow paths on the cliffs decides not to proceed to alien country while leaving his ladylove suffering. He sincerely worries that his ladylove would be in serious danger from some unknown quarter when he leaves her alone for a longer period. See how the hero is expressing himself to his lonely heart over his concern for his ladylove.

*vaṅgāk kaḍanda ceṅkar pēdai*  
*eḷāluṟa vīḷṇdeṇak kaṇavar kāṇādu*  
*kuḷalicaik kural kuṟumpala agavum*  
*kuṇṟukeḷu ciṟunerī ariya yeṇṇādu*  
*maṟapparun kādali oḷiya*  
*irappal eṇbadīṇḍu ilamaikku muḍivē*  
 (Tūṅgalōriyār, *KRT*. 151)

Leaving her,  
 and not considering that the  
 journey is difficult through  
 the narrow paths on the cliffs,  
 where a male *vanga* bird has left  
 his red-legged female, and a hawk  
 dives down and attacks her,  
 and unable to see her mate,

she cries out in a few short  
 plaintive notes,  
 sounding like music from a flute,  
 might be the end of my youth.  
 (KRT. 151, Tr. Vaidehi)<sup>6</sup>

The hero, though departed from his beloved for quite some time, does not wish to keep away from her forever. He sincerely loves her and is seriously concerned for her well-being. So concerned with the safety and security of his ladylove is he, and foreseeing the awaiting danger to her, that the hero cancels his journey before setting off even at the cost of putting his prosperous life at risk. Though the journey is a necessary one, he abandons just before proceeding to a foreign country, as he judged living with his ladylove was more important than everything else.

The *uḷḷurai* here is that the hero thinks that the heroine might have to suffer like the red-legged female bird, if he leaves her and goes to earn wealth. 'The *vaṅgā* bird' mentioned in the poem could be 'a small variety of stork'. The term '*eḷāl*' refers to 'a hawk' which is notorious for attacking its prey. Symbolically, 'the former' stands for 'the hero' whereas 'the latter' stands for 'any troublemaker/wrongdoer/ miscreant'.

### ***Tiṇai Mayakkam* – Overlapping of *Tiṇais* (The Aspects of Love):**

Some poems in Sangam literature may speak about one particular aspect of love theme but at the same time they refer to other aspects of love too. This cluster of love themes in a poem is possible and is placed under the category known as '*tiṇai mayakkam*'<sup>7</sup> (overlapping of *tiṇais*). For example, let us consider



a very famous *kuriñci-tiṇai* poem to understand how certain elements of flora and fauna serve as symbols in a given situation.

*yārum illait tāṇē kaḷvaṇ  
tāṇadu poyppiṇ yāṇevaṇ ceygō?  
tiṇait tāḷaṇṇa ciṇrupacuṇ kāla  
oḷugunīr āral pārkkum  
kurugum uṇḍutāṇ maṇanda ṇāṇrē.  
(Kabilar, KRT. 25)*

Only the thief was there, no one else.  
And if he should lie, what can I do?

There was only  
a thin-legged heron  
standing on legs yellow as millet stems  
and looking  
for lampreys  
in the running water

when he took me.  
(KRT. 25, Tr. A.K. Ramanujan, 1985: 17)

“The word “thief” applied to the lover, and the millet-stem legs of the heron are looking for fish in the water while they are secretly making love. Here in the poem, the predatory nature of the heron is what is in focus. The bird looking for fish in the running waters is like the lover taking his woman. The heron, indifferent and selfish, is contrasted with the heroine, who gives herself to her lover” (Hart 1979: 9).

From another point of view, ‘the unseeing, uncaring heron’ is meant to be likened to ‘the world’. This type of an individual heron who is not attending to anything but his own prey, and the lack of witnesses are part of the suggestion implied by the text.

While the heroine gives herself to her lover, the world is concerned only with finding something to eat in order to stay alive. The world's only concern with the heroine's love is to gossip about it. 'The heron' is also meant to be likened to 'the hero', who shares the selfish attitude of the world. 'The heron's eating eels from the running water' is a symbol for 'sexual gratification': like the heron, the hero is concerned with gratifying himself, not with love and its responsibilities. And the woman remembers the heron vividly because it crystallizes her fears regarding her lover's possible treachery.

While correlating the imagery of the poem with the theory of fertility, George L. Hart observes (1979: 9):

In the sexual act with her lover and as the object of gossip afterwards, the heroine is as helpless as a wriggling eel in the beak of the heron. The bird's legs are like millet stems. The millet stem holds grain, the source of life for others and the fruit of fertility, while the heron's legs hold a bird that is predatory, that uses others but contributes nothing to their welfare. While it seems that the hero's act might lead to marriage with its fruit (children), it is fact only a predatory act, and the hero has no intention of marrying his new mistress.

Though the poem is firmly set in *kuṛiñci* (lovers' union, the millet stems), the water and the heron seem subtly to suggest *neydal* (anxious waiting), and the mood is close to *marudam* (infidelity) or fear of it. Thus, the vivid moment of love-making (with which the poem climaxes) and the focussed image of the predatory heron, representing that moment, that stays in the woman's mind, contain past experience, present doubts, and future fears: three different landscapes are suggested. According to A.K. Ramanujan (1985: 284), "The poem is thus a mosaic of given forms, and a dance of meanings as well."

To sum up, we could say that the plants, birds and beasts depicted in Sangam love poems in one way or another symbolize something beyond their concrete meaning appearing explicitly in the poems. Sangam love poems mostly symbolize or describe the heroes with robust, mighty and forceful beings such as the honey bees, hawks, buffalos, male pigeons, stallions, male elephants, tigers, lions etc. However, heroines were referred to by way of soft and gentle flowers or plants like lotus, water-lily, jasmine, *Strobilanthes kunthiana*, birds like parrot, peahen, pigeon; or animals like cow, doe, she-elephant etc. It may be stated here that the classical Tamil poets, more often than not, also perceived the female gender as a soft or weaker section living under the shadow of and care of their mighty counterparts.

---

## Notes

- \* This paper with the same title is published earlier in the International research journal “*PANDANUS*’ 13/2, *NATURE IN LITERATURE, ART, MYTH AND RITUAL*”, Vol. 7, No. 2, Philosophical Faculty, Institute of South and Central Asia, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, 2013, pp. 07–31.
- 1. Birds and beasts, that includes insects (ant, honey bee, fly etc.), amphibians (frog, toad etc.), crustaceans (shrimp, crabs etc.), reptiles (lizard, snake, crocodile, tortoise, turtle, etc.), mammals (cow, buffalo, pig, bear, elephant etc.), birds (parrot, peacock, hen, fowl, heron, eagle etc.) and animals (lion, tiger, elephant, wild dog, fox etc.).

2. In Tamil, the terms *maññai* (purely a literary usage) and *mayil* (mostly a colloquial usage) both commonly refer to peahen and peacock. It is the adjectives ‘*āṇ*’ (male) and ‘*peṇ*’ (female) added to the above terms that actually make the difference.
3. Vaidehi, *Kurunthokai* 101–200 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
<<http://sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.wordpress.com/kurunthokai-101-200/>>
4. Vaidehi, *Akananuru* 1–50 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
<<http://sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.wordpress.com/akananuru-1-50/>>
5. Vaidehi, *Kurunthokai* 101–200 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
<<http://sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.wordpress.com/kurunthokai-101-200/>>
6. Vaidehi, *Kurunthokai* 101–200 (*Sangam Poems Translated by Vaidehi*), Accessed on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2014.  
<<http://sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.wordpress.com/kurunthokai-101-200/>>
7. The term ‘*tiṇai mayakkam*’ literally means “the confusion or blending of regions”.



## References

### Primary Sources (in Tamil):

- Akanānūru*, 1966, Edited with a commentary by P.V. Somasundaranar, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Aiṅkūrunūru*, 1979, Edited with a commentary by P.V. Somasundaranar, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Cilappadigāram*, 1985 (photo-film impn. ed.), Ilanko Adigal, Tanjavur: Tamil University.
- Kalittogai*, 1981, With a commentary by Naccinarkkiniyar, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Kuruntogai*, 1955, Edited with a commentary by P.V. Somasundaranar, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Narriṇai*, 1962, Edited with a commentary by A. Narayanaswamy Aiyar, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Paripāḍal*, 1956, With an old commentary by Parimelalagar & Edited by U.Ve. Swaminathaiyar, 4th ed., Madras: Kabir Accukkudam.
- Paḍiṇeṇ Kīlkkāṇakku*, 1963, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Paḍirrupattu*, 1973, Edited with a commentary by Avvai Duraisamy Pillai, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.

- Paṭṭiṇappālai*, 1968, in *Pattuppāṭṭu*, Vol. II, Edited with a commentary by P.V. Somasundaranar, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Perumpāṇ Ṍruppaḍai*, 1968, in *Pattuppāṭṭu*, Vol. I, Edited with a commentary by P.V. Somasundaranar, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Porunar Ṍruppaḍai*, 1968, in *Pattuppāṭṭu*, Vol. I, Edited with a commentary by P.V. Somasundaranar, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Puṛaṇānūru*, 1978, Edited with a commentary by P.V. Somasundaranar, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Tirukkuraḷ*, 1974, With a commentary by Mu. Varadarajan, 26th impn., Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.

### Secondary Sources (in Tamil):

- Gopalakrishna Achariyar, Vai. Mu., (comm.), 1965, *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam – Ṍraṇya Kāṇḍam*, IV<sup>th</sup> ed., Chennai: Kuvai Publications.
- Kathiraiver Pillai, N., 1984, *Tamiḷ Moḷiyagarāḍi*, VI<sup>th</sup> corrected ed., New Delhi: Asian Educational Services.
- Vaiyapuri Pillai, S., (ed.), 1982, *Tamiḷ Lexicon*, Vol. III, Madras: University of Madras.

### Secondary Sources (in English):

- Acharya, Dr. C.R., (tr.), 1999, *Maxims of Truth*, Tiruttani: C.R. Acharya Publication.
- Dikshitar, Prof. V.R. Ramachandra, (tr.), 1978, *The Cilappatikaram*, Chennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Drew, Rev. W. H. & Rev. John Lazarus, (tr.), 1989, *Thirukkural*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services.

- Hart, George L. III, 1979, *Poets of the Tamil Anthologies*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Hart, George L. III., & Hank Heifetz, 1999. *The Four Hundred Songs of War and Wisdom*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Parameswaran, P., (March) 1995, 'A. K. Ramanujan as a Translator of Caṅkam Classics: An Assessment', in *Journal of Asian Studies*, Dr. Shu Hikosaka (ed.), Madras: Institute of Asian Studies.
- Parthasarathy, R., 1993, *The Cilappatikaram of Ilanko Atikal*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ponniah, Prof. S.M., (tr.), 1997, *Tamil Poetry Through Ages*, Vol. I, Dr. G. Samuel & Dr. Shu Hikosaka (eds.), Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies.
- Pope, Rew. G.U., (tr.), 2009, *Thirukkural*, Chennai: Sree Shenbhaga Pathippagam.
- Pope, Rew. G.U. & F.W. Ellis, (tr.), 1958, *Naladiyar*, Chennai: South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society.
- Rajagopal, Govindaswamy, 2015, *Mind and Conduct: Behavioural Psycho-logy in the Sangam Poetry*, New Delhi: Sun International Publishers.
- Ramanujan, A. K., 1985, *Poems of Love and War*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ramanujan, A. K., 2006, *The Collected Essays of A. K. Ramanujan*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Sangave, Dr. Vilas A., 1990, *Aspects of Jaina Religion*, New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith Publication.
- Seshadri, K.G., (tr.), 1996. *Paripatal*, Dr. M. Shanmugam Pillai & Dr. P. Thiagarajan (eds.), Chennai: Institute of Asian studies.
- Subramaniaswami, Satguru Sivaya, (tr.), 2000, *Tirukural*, Delhi: Abinav Publications.
- Subramanyam, Ka. Naa., 1977, *The Anklet Story: Silappadhikaaram*, New Delhi: Agam Prakashan.
- Sundaram, P.S., (tr.), 1991, *Kamba Ramayanam – Aranya Kanda*, Chennai: Department of Tamil Development – Culture.
- Zvelebil, Kamil V., 1973, *The Smile of Murugan*, Leiden: E. J. Brill
- Zvelebil, Kamil V., 1974, *Tamil Literature*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.



**Web Sources:**

<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moksha\\_\(Jainism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moksha_(Jainism))>  
<<http://sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.wordpress.com/akananuru-1-50/>>  
<<http://sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.wordpress.com/kurunthokai-101-200/>>  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.wordpress.com/pathitruppathu-21-30/>>  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/a-porunaratrappadai/>>  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-1-50/>>  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-150-200/>>  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-201-250/>>  
<<http://Sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/purananuru-301-350/>>  
<[http://www.hinduwebsite.com/sacredscripts/hinduism/dharma/manusmriti\\_2.asp](http://www.hinduwebsite.com/sacredscripts/hinduism/dharma/manusmriti_2.asp)>

## Index

### A

*ā*, 84.

Acharya, 12.

Aḍaineḍum Kalviyār, 53, 55.

Aḍiyamāṇ, 39; ~ Neḍumāṇ

Añci, 21.

*āḍu*, 84.

adulthood, 35.

*agaṇ aṭṭil*, 48.

agricultural ~ people, 81;

~ region, 79.

*aham*, 32.

*ahimsā*, 15.

Aiyaḍigaḷ Kāḍavarkōṇ

Nāyaṇār, 23.

Aiyūr Muḍavaṇār, 36.

*akam*, 32, 41, 67, 77;

~ poems, 35, 78;

~ landscapes 78.

*Akanānūru*, 84, 89.

*āl*, 66.

Ālampēric Cāṭṭaṇār, 66.

*alavaṇ*, 95.

alcohol, 39.

alien kings, 43, 45, 62.

*aḷḷūr*, 89, 90;

*Ālvārs*, 23.

*āmai*, 89, 95.

*āmāṇ*, 79.

*āmbal*, 46, 92, 95.

Ammūvaṇār, 67, 98.

Amphibians, 77.

*aṇaṇḡugaḷs*, 66.

*anburu kāmam*, 35.

ancient poets, 32.

Añcil Āndaiyār, 55.

Andhra Pradesh, 22.

animosity, 52.

anklet, 18.

animals, 77, 106.

*aṇṇam*, 95.

*aṇṇil*, 95–97.

*Anthocephalus*, 66;

~ *cadamba*, 66;

~ *indicus*, 66.

anxiety, 77, 96.

anxious waiting, 78, 95, 97,

105.

*āpad dharma*, 41.

*aparigraha*, 15.

Arakkōṇam, 23.

*aram*, 14, 32, 35, 48.

*Āraṇya Kāṇḍam*, 25.

Aricil Kilār, 38.

arid landscape, 79.

*ariṇaṇ*, 2, 13.

armies, 47, 48, 57.

army, 7, 56.

arrogance, 52.

Ārulaviyanāṭṭu Ālampēri

Cāṭṭaṇār. 96.

Ārumuga Nāvalar, 24.

*aruṇcamam*, 4.

Aryan tradition, 45.

*asceticism*, 37.

ascetic life, 35, 37.

*astēyā*, 15.

*ātti*, 52.

august men, 14.

author(s), 4, 12, 14, 25, 28.

Āvūr Mūlaṅkilār, 59, 67, 73.

Avvaiyār, 39, 40.

awards, 4.

Āy, 34; ~ Aṇḍiraṇ, 21, 54.

## B

bamboo(s), 79, 84, 85.

bard(s), 39, 43, 49, 50, 53, 58,  
62.

barren lands, 42.

basic material, 78.

battle(s), 3–5, 32, 33, 41–42,  
44, 47, 50–54, 56, 57, 59,  
60–63, 86, 88–90, 96;  
~ field, 6–8, 40–44, 54.

bear, 79.

bees, 80, 86, 90,

beetle, 79.

beggars, 36.

behaviour patterns, 78.

belief, 34,

Bellāri, 22.

bell(s), 38, 88.

beneficence, 18, 28.

benignant grace, 28.

Bhakti Movement, 3, 21, 23,  
28.

Bhūdam Ālvār, 23.

Bhūdampulavaṇār, 87.

*bhūdams*, 66.

birds, 57.

birds and beasts, 79, 84, 89,  
95, 99, 106.

birth, 4, 12–14, 34.

*Biryani*, 39.

blacksmith, 4–6.

Black winged myrobalan, 88.

blame, 44, 45, 61.

Blue, 79, 85; ~ dyeing rosebay,  
99; ~ flowers, 79;  
~ Nelumbo, 95.

Brahma, 66.

*brahmacharya*, 15.

Brahmin(s), 41, 46, 47, 55.

brandy, 39.

brave men, 32.

bravery, 47.

breasts, 38.

brothel, 91.

brothers, 100, 102.

*Buddhimāṇ*, 13.

buffalo, 89–93, 106.

bull, 6, 7, 75, 83, 84.

bullocks, 86.

## C

- cactus plant, 66.  
 Cadamba tree, 66.  
 Cāgālasaṇār, 66.  
 calf, 84.  
*Calophyllum inophyllum*, 95.  
*cāḷpu*, 9.  
 calves, 50.  
*caivac cāṇrōr*, 24.  
*camayam*, 24.  
*camayac cāṇrōr*, 24  
*cāṇrāṇmai*, 2, 18.  
*cāṇravar*, 16.  
*cāṇrōn*, 2–6, 8, 9, 11–14, 17, 18, 24.  
*cāṇrōr*, 2, 8, 9, 11, 14–21, 23–27; ~ *kavi*, 25.  
 capital city, 22.  
 carnival, 86.  
 cash reward, 62.  
 celestial(s), 34, 56, 61; ~ life, 34.  
 celibacy, 15.  
*ceḷiyaṇ*, 89.  
*ceṇṇāy*, 99.  
*Cēra(s)*, 13, 21, 22, 51; ~ *-nāḍu*, 21.  
*Cēramāṇ*, 44; ~ Kaṇaikkāl Irumporai, 44; Kōpperuñ-cēral, 49; ~ Neḍuñcēralādaṇ, 43; ~ Peruñcēralādaṇ, 44.  
*cēval*, 84, 89, 100.  
*ceyyōḷ*, 92.  
 chameleon, 99.  
 chariot(s), 84–86, 93, 94.  
 charioteer, 84, 86.  
 chaste woman, 59.  
 chastity, 44–46, 81, 83, 99.  
*Cheliyaṇ*, 90.  
 Chennai, 26.  
 child, 6, 14, 44, 49, 92, 93.  
 children, 9, 10, 19, 36, 42, 49, 59, 63–65, 93, 94, 105.  
 chieftain(s), 21, 31, 34, 38, 39, 41, 54, 64, 68.  
 chivalrous, ~ life, 33; ~ son, 6; ~ warrior, 6, 7, 67.  
*Cilappadigāram*, 3, 18, 20, 24.  
*ciral*, 95.  
 Cīttalai Cāttaṇār, 84.  
 cities, 22, 57.  
 citizens, 32, 47, 54, 56, 57, 68.  
 city, 22, 23, 48, 52, 57.  
 civic duties, 9.  
 civilization, 1.  
 clandestine, 35; ~ love, 35, 80, 96; ~ union, 78.  
 clans, 3.  
 classical ~ anthologies, 21; ~ language, 21, 31; ~ status, 31; ~ Tamil, 78, 106.  
 cock, 89.  
 code(s), 33, 53, 55, 77, 91; ~ of conduct, 32, 67; ~ of virtuous, 34.  
*Cōḷa(s)*, 13, 21, 23, 41, 45, 101; ~ kingdom, 19, 23; ~ *-nāḍu*, 22.  
*Cōḷaṇ*, 43; ~ Cenkaṇṇaṇ, 43; ~ Iḷaṇcēṭcēṇṇi, 42; ~ Nalaṇkilli, 55.  
*Cōḷar*, 100.  
 commentators, 3.

common men, 33.  
 compassion, 35, 38, 65, 68.  
 conch, 48.  
 concubine, 89.  
 conjugal life, 88.  
 connotation(s), 8, 14, 20, 25,  
     32, 80.  
 contented men, 10.  
 contextual meaning, 2, 3, 6,  
     12, 16, 17, 28.  
 Convent Schools, 26.  
 conviction, 24, 53, 63.  
*cōru*, 22.  
 cosmic dance, 23.  
 country, 4, 21–23, 26, 33, 39–  
     41, 47–49, 54, 56, 58, 63,  
     68, 85, 87, 88, 90, 91, 96,  
     98, 102, 103.  
 couplet(s), 12–14, 18.  
 courageous men, 20.  
 cousins, 61–63.  
 cow(s), 41, 84, 87, 88, 106.  
 crab, 89, 95.  
 crane, 95.  
 criminals, 55, 94.  
 crocodile, 89, 95, 106.  
 crooks, 94.  
 crop landscape, 88.  
 crown(s), 40, 64.  
 crustaceans, 77.  
 cucumber, 46.  
 culture(s), 1–4, 15, 3, 33, 37.  
 cultured men, 9.  
*curā*, 95.  
*curumbu*, 79.

## D

dance, 50.  
 daughter(s), 51, 52.  
 death, 26, 29, 34, 43, 44.  
 decency, 52, 63.  
 decent culture, 32.  
 deer, 84.  
 delightful justice, 32.  
 demonic behaviour, 57.  
*dēsa dharma*, 41.  
 desert region, 99, 101.  
 despondency, 86.  
*dharma*(s), 15, 32, 41.  
 Didactic Literature, 13, 18, 40.  
 dignified culture, 33.  
 dignity, 38, 45, 53, 63.  
 dishonour, 33.  
 disloyal husbands, 38.  
 dividends, 34.  
 divinity, 3.  
 doe, 85, 86, 106.  
 dog, 44.  
 domestic life, 37.  
 donkeys, 57.  
 donor(s), 34.  
 dragon fly, 79.  
 Drew & Lazarus, 13.  
 drums, 33, 48, 57, 67.  
 dynasties, 51.  
 dynasty, 41, 48, 61.

## E

eagle, 99.  
 earth, 25, 34, 36, 48, 66, 80.  
 ecstasy, 77.  
 education, 14, 15, 18, 26.

eel, 105.  
 egg(s), 82, 83.  
*eḷāl*, 103.  
 elephant(s), 5–7, 21, 22, 47, 50,  
     57, 58, 60, 63, 64, 67, 79,  
     90, 99, 101, 106.  
 elk, 57.  
 Ellis, 16.  
 elopement, 100.  
 eminent scholars, 6.  
 empires, 3.  
 enemies, 42, 43, 47, 51, 55, 57,  
     58, 60, 65, 67, 90, 100, 101.  
 enemy, 5, 32, 39, 42, 45, 48,  
     60, 61, 63; ~ countries, 55,  
     57; ~ kings, 32, 45, 48, 51.  
 England, 12, 16.  
 English, 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10–12,  
     16, 17, 26.  
*engu*, 79.  
 Ēṇicēri Muḍamōciyār, 34, 54.  
 environment, 77, 78.  
 ephemeral life, 51.  
*erumai*, 89, 92.  
 esteemed person, 2.  
 ethical ~ act, 48; ~ behaviour,  
     62; ~ codes, 33, 55; ~ con-  
     duct, 32, 56; deed, 35, 45.  
     ~ factors, 47; ~ literature,  
     11; ~ notion, 48; ~ princi-  
     ple(s), 31, 32, 35, 41, 42,  
     45, 48, 53–55, 67, 68;  
     ~ tenets, 35; ~ trait, 33;  
     ~ work, 15.  
 ethics, 32, 37, 39, 42–44, 65.

ethos, 35, 38, 39, 42, 44, 46,  
     63, 66.

*Eṭṭuttogai*, 21, 31.

Europeans, 35.

exceptional warrior, 3.

excitement, 77.

exemplary life, 24.

*exterior actions*, 77.

extramarital relationship, 37,  
     89.

eyes, 31, 34, 47, 52, 58, 59.

## F

falsehood, 33.

familial life, 6, 14.

family, 10, 36, 38, 61, 62, 94,  
     99, 102; ~ life, 35–37, 36,  
     67, 84, 86, 92, 102; ~ mem-  
     bers, 9, 38, 46, 100, 101.

father, 4–6, 51, 52.

female ~ friend, 81; ~ ghoul,  
     58.

feminine senses, 79.

fertile lands, 37, 42, 57, 58.

fertility, 81, 84, 86, 105.

fine ~ conduct, 32; ~ customs,  
     32; ~ duties, 33; ~ gestures,  
     52; ~ jewels, 38; ~ water,  
     56; ~ woman, 36; ~ quali-  
     ties, 54; .

fire, 44, 46, 52, 55, 66.

fish, 89–95, 104.

fishermen, 97.

five, 78; ~ landscapes, 78;  
     ~ *tiṇais*, 78, 79; ~ tracts, 25.

flags, 47.

flawless life, 33.  
 flora and fauna, 78, 104.  
 floral symbols, 78.  
 flower(s), 79–81, 83, 85, 86,  
     90–92, 95, 106.  
 flute, 103.  
 food culture, 39, 40.  
 foot soldiers, 47.  
 foreigners, 35.  
 foremost duty, 6.  
 forest, 62, 83, 84, 99;  
     ~ region, 78, 83.  
 foundation, 31.  
 Four Hundred Poems, 4.  
 fowl, 89.  
 fox, 58, 99, 101.  
 fragrance, 83, 86.  
 fragrant screwpine, 95.  
 fratricidal wars, 13.  
 funeral pyre, 46.  
 futile exercise, 2.

## G

garland(s), 55, 61, 83, 94.  
 generosity, 34, 38, 44.  
 geography, 1.  
 ghee, 46, 67.  
 ghosts, 66.  
 ghouls, 66.  
 gifts, 4, 50, 53, 54, 62.  
 girl(s), 7, 51, 52, 66, 80, 82,  
     83.  
 goat, 79, 84.  
 god(s), 66, 67, 96.  
 goddess, 93.

gōdāvari, 25.  
 golden ~ bowls, 50; ~ pitchers,  
     40; ~ summit, 56.  
 good ~ deed, 2; ~ habits, 32;  
     ~ -ness, 2.  
 gossiping, 81, 97.  
 grace, 36, 49, 56.  
 grand tribute, 24.  
 gravel, 46.  
 great, ~ centre, 23; ~ donor,  
     21, 34; ~ despair, 38;  
     ~ dynasties, 51; ~ elders,  
     11; ~ friend, 43; ~ grief, 38;  
     ~ hospitality, 36; ~ kings,  
     48; ~ Learned, 24; ~ man,  
     2, 3, 12; ~ men, 12, 15, 19,  
     20; ~ *Nāyaṇmārs*, 23;  
     ~ Pēgaṇ, 38; ~ people, 15,  
     20; ~ persons, 3; ~ poet, 24,  
     39; ~ pride, 7; ~ progenies,  
     23; ~ prophet, 23; ~ religi-  
     ous places, 23; ~ saints, 28;  
     ~ skill, 33; ~ soul-mate, 43;  
     ~ Tamil, 16; ~ Tamils, 26;  
     ~ *Tirukkural*, 12, 20; ~ tra-  
     dition, 66, 67; ~ Universal  
     Philosopher, 23; ~ virtues,  
     47; ~ warriors, 3; ~ wealth,  
     60, 65.

greed, 15.  
 Greeks, 40.  
 guests, 36.

## H

harlot(s), 89, 91, 92, 94, 95.  
 Hart, George L., 5, 6, 78, 81,  
     93, 97, 101, 104, 105.

hawks, 106.  
 heart(s), 39, 41, 47, 50, 61.  
 heavenly ~ life, 34; ~ lives, 34.  
 hen, 89.  
 hermits, 37.  
 heroic ~ age, 9, 12, 13, 31, 32,  
     51; ~ culture, 53; ~ deeds,  
     54, 67; ~ excellence, 8;  
     ~ life, 67; ~ period, 32;  
     ~ son, 8; ~ times, 32;  
     ~ tribes, 66; ~ trait, 32, 51;  
     ~ valour 7.  
 heroism, 33.  
 heron, 89, 95, 104–06.  
 hidden meanings, 77.  
 high culture, 45.  
 higher ~ aims, 31; ~ world, 34,  
     60.  
 Himalayas, 56.  
 history, 1.  
 holy cities, 22.  
 home(s), 36, 37, 58, 78, 84, 86,  
     91, 92; ~ coming, 86;  
     ~ making, 37; ~ town, 99.  
 honest life, 33.  
 honesty, 15, 17.  
 honey, 79, 80, 84; ~ bee(s), 80,  
     81, 91, 106.  
 honorific title, 24.  
 honour(s), 4, 31, 44.  
 horse(s), 38, 47, 57, 85, 86.  
 hospitality, 36, 50.  
 hostility, 52, 61.  
 household life, 4.  
 Human(s), 29, 31, 35, 44, 65;  
     ~ aspirations, 86;  
     ~ beings, 10, 17, 35, 56,

63, 68; ~ conduct, 86;  
 ~ emotions, 79; ~ exis-  
 tence, 81; ~ feelings, 77;  
 ~ kind, 56, 78, ~ life, 9;  
 ~ love, 35, 78; ~ relation,  
 59, 81; ~ qualities, 9, 15,  
 20, 28; ~ society, 35;  
 ~ values, 28.  
 humanitarianism, 45.  
 humanism, 56, 59, 61, 64  
 humanistic values, 13.  
 humanity, 14, 63.  
 humility, 11.  
 husband(s), 6, 18–20, 35–38,  
     45, 46, 63, 83, 84, 87, 88,  
     90–94, 96.  
 hymns, 21.

## I

Iḍaikkunrūr Kilār, 42, 64.  
 Iḍaiyaṇ Cēndaṇkorraṇār, 54,  
     100.  
*iḷaiyar*, 9.  
 Iḷamperuñceṇṇi, 54, 101.  
 Iḷandattaṇ, 65.  
 Iḷaṇkumaṇaṇ, 62.  
 Iḷantiraiyaṇ, 48.  
 Iḷavandigaippallit Tuñciya  
     Naṇmāraṇ, 47, 59.  
 Iḷavēṭṭaṇār, 39, 67.  
*illaṛam*, 35.  
 illicit relationship, 37.  
 Imayavarambaṇ Neḍuñcēra-  
     lādaṇ, 42.  
 immoral ~ act, 14; ~ life, 15.



implied ~ meaning, 80;  
     ~ metaphor(s), 77; ~ simile, 89.  
 implicit metaphor, 81.  
 improper ~ attitude, 92; ~ love, 79.  
 India, 1, 31, 37, 46.  
 Indian(s), 1, 14, 35; ~ custom, 45; marriage, 35; ~ society, 39.  
 Industrialization, 77.  
 infidelity, 88, 90, 91, 105.  
 innocent ~ children, 63;  
     ~ people, 41  
*īnrāl*, 14.  
 insects, 77, 80.  
 inset(s), 77, 80.  
*interior* ~ feelings, 77; ~ landscape, 77.  
 intruders, 13.  
*iraicci*, 77.  
*irāl*, 95.  
*iralai*, 84.  
*iraṅgal*, 78.  
 Irumbiḍarttalaiyār, 36.  
*iruttal*, 78.

## J

jack fruit, 79.  
 Jain, 16; ~ monks, 13, 15;  
     ~ philosophy, 28; ~ seers, 16; ~ texts, 28.  
 Jaina epic, 20.  
 Jainism, 23.  
*jana dharma*, 41.  
 jasmine, 83–85, 106.  
*Jasminum auriculatum* 83.

jewels, 36, 38, 46,  
*Jnānī*(s), 12, 20.  
 journalists, 32.  
 justice(s), 3, 18–20, 32, 48, 56.

## K

*Kabilar*, 36, 38, 81, 104.  
*Kaḍai Ēlu Vaḷḷalgaḷ*, 21, 34.  
 Kaḍaluḷ Māynda Iḷamperu-  
     vaḷudi, 33.  
*kaḍambu*, 66.  
*kaḍavuḷ*, 66, 96.  
 Kaḍiyālūr Uruttiraṅ Kaṇṇaṇār,  
     48.  
*kaḍuvaṇ*, 79.  
*kaidai*, 95.  
*kaikkīlai*, 79.  
 Kākkaiṇṇiṇiyār  
     Nacellaiyār, 8.  
*kaḷ*, 39, 40.  
*Kaḷabhras*, 13.  
*kālai*, 4, 6, 7.  
 Kaḷarsīṅga Nāyaṇār, 23.  
 Kaḷāttalaiyār, 41, 43, 44.  
*kaḷavaṇ*, 89.  
*kaḷavu*, 35.  
*Kalittogai*, 56.  
 Kaliya Nāyaṇār, 23.  
*kaḷḷi*, 66.  
*kaḷīru*, 89.  
*kaḷugu*, 99.  
 Kaḷumalam, 44.  
*kaḷvaṇ*, 104.  
*kalviyīrperiyaṇ*, 24.  
 Kalyāṇasundaraṇār, 24.  
 Kamaraj University, 26.

Kambaṇ, 24, 25.  
*Kamba Rāmāyaṇam*, 3, 24.  
 Kamil V. Zvelebil, 4–6.  
*kaṇavaṇ*, 36.  
 Kāñcipuram, 23.  
 Kaṇḍīrak Kōpperum Naḷli, 21.  
 Kaṇṇagi, 18, 19, 38.  
 Kaṇṇappa Nāyaṇār, 23.  
*kaṇru*, 84.  
*kārāṇ*, 89.  
 Kāraikkāl Ammaiyaṛ, 23.  
 Karikālaṇ, 44.  
 Karikāl, 43; ~ Cōlaṇ, 43;  
 ~ Vaḷavaṇ, 48, 49.  
 Kāri Kiḷār, 49, 55.  
 Karnataka, 13.  
*karpu*, 35.  
*kaṛṛōṇ*, 2.  
 Karuṇkūḷal Ādaṇār, 55.  
*karupporuḷ*, 78.  
 Karuvūr Kadappillaic Cāttanār,  
 66.  
 Kāvaṛpeṇḍu, 7.  
*kaviccakravarti*, 24.  
 Kāviri, 22.  
 Kāvrippūmpaṭṭiṇam, 19, 48.  
*kēṇmai*, 81.  
 Kerala, 22.  
*kiḷi*, 79.  
 kindness, 49, 50, 55,  
 king(s), 3–7, 9, 10, 11, 15, 18–  
 21, 31, 33, 38–45, 47–56,  
 58–66, 68, 90, 101.  
 kingdom(s), 3, 23, 31, 47, 51,  
 62, 91, 99, 100.  
 Kingfisher, 95.  
 kitchen, 48.

Kirubānanda Vāriyaṛ, 24.  
*kokku*, 89.  
*koḷgai*, 9; ~ *cāṇṛōr*, 11.  
*kōḷi*, 89.  
*kollar*, 4.  
 Kōpperuñcōlaṇ, 43, 59.  
 Kōpperu Naḷli, 54.  
 Kōvalaṇ, 18, 19.  
 Kōvūr Kiḷār, 42, 43, 61–65.  
 Kuḍakkō Iḷancēral Irumporai,  
 56.  
 Kūḍalūr Kiḷār, 36.  
*kuḍikku viḷakku*, 36.  
 Kuḍumi, 56.  
*kula dharma*, 41.  
 Kuḷamurattut Tuñciya Kiḷli  
 Vaḷavaṇ, 63.  
*kulīṇpurush*, 13.  
 Kumaṇaṇ, 62.  
*kuṇḡumappoṭṭu*, 46.  
*kuṇṛanāḍaṇ*, 81.  
 Kuṇṛattūr, 23.  
*kuraṅgu*, 79.  
*kuṛiñci*, 78–81, 95, 99, 105;  
 ~ flowers, 80; ~ landscapes,  
 99; ~ poem, 80, 81; ~ reg-  
 ion, 79; ~ *tiṇai*, 78, 80, 104.  
*kūṛilāṇmai*, 56.  
*kurugu*, 95, 104.  
 Kuṛuṇkōḷiyūr Kiḷār, 42.  
*Kuruntogai*, 80, 81, 86.  
*kuruvi*, 89.  
*kuvaḷai*, 95.

## L

labour pain, 14.  
 laburnum, 61.

lady, 36.  
 ladylove, 100, 102, 103.  
*Lagerstroemia speciosa*, 88.  
 lair, 8.  
 lakes, 84.  
 Lakshmi, 66.  
 landscape, 77–79, 84, 88, 99–101, 105.  
 language(s), 1, 2, 11, 21, 27, 28, 31,  
 learned, 2, 15; ~ man, 12, 13;  
 ~ men, 16; ~ ones, 16, 17;  
 people, 14.  
 lesson, 17.  
 life, 4, 9, 10, 13, 15, 18, 20, 24,  
 27, 31–33, 35, 37, 40–42,  
 44, 47, 49, 51, 53, 54, 63–  
 65, 67, 77–79, 84, 86, 93,  
 94, 101–103, 105; ~ force,  
 83.  
 lilies, 92–95.  
 lions, 105.  
 literary, ~ act, 1; ~ process;  
 ~ 1; ~ terms, 2; ~ trans-  
 lation, 1; ~ works, 15; 31.  
 literature, 1, 2.  
 liquor(s), 39, 40, 50.  
 livestock, 61.  
 lizard, 99.  
 loose morals, 91.  
 lotus, 90, 91, 95, 106; ~ tank,  
 91.  
 love, 35–37, 54, 68, 77–80, 82,  
 83, 86, 89, 93–95, 99, 103,  
 104; ~ and war, 31, 37;  
 ~ birds, 95, 97; ~ feelings,  
 78; ~ making, 105;

~ poems, 89, 106; ~ poetry,  
 78; ~ theme, 79, 99.  
 lover, 75–82, 86, 90, 91, 95,  
 97, 99, 102, 104, 105.  
 lover's union, 80, 105.  
 loyalty, 17, 26.

## M

Madurai, 18, 19, 26, 36, 40,  
 45, 47, 52–54, 96.  
*magal*, 51.  
*magan*, 7, 12, 13.  
*Magatpār Kāñci*, 51.  
 magnum opus, 24.  
 Mahābalipuram, 23.  
 Mailāpūr, 23.  
 Malaiyamān, 63.  
 Malaiyaṇ Tirumuḍik Kāri, 21.  
*maḷḷar*, 92.  
 mammals, 77.  
 man, 9, 11–15, 17, 28, 31, 35–  
 37, 44, 53, 55, 56, 64, 77,  
 79, 80, 81, 83–86, 90, 94,  
 97–100; ~ hood, 59;  
 ~ -made disasters, 57.  
*māṇ*, 84.  
*maṇaiivi*, 9.  
*maṇaikku viḷakku*, 36.  
*mandi*, 79.  
 mankind, 37, 77.  
 Māṇkuḍi Kilār, 67.  
 mango, 66, 89.  
 manliness, 15, 47, 55, 56.  
*mañṇai*, 79, 81, 83, 84.  
 Maṇimalai Aḍigal, 24.  
 Mārōkkattu Nappasalaiyār, 42,  
 46.

- marriage, 35, 51, 52, 81, 82, 105  
 married life, 9, 35, 36.  
 martial ~ courage, 43, 44, 61;  
   ~ laws, 42, 43.  
*marudam*, 37, 78, 89, 105;  
   ~ poem, 89, 93; ~ region,  
   91; ~ -*tiṇai*, 79, 89; ~ tract,  
   89.  
 Marudaṇḍ Iḷanāgaṇār, 36, 47,  
   52, 54.  
 masculine singular, 2.  
 Mast-wood, 95.  
*mata dharma*, 41.  
 material gratification, 77.  
 matriculation schools, 26.  
 matrimonial alliances, 52.  
*mayil*, 79, 84.  
 meat, 40, 50.  
 memorial stone, 67.  
 men, 32, 33, 36, 37, 40, 42, 46,  
   53, 60, 63, 68, 80, 81, 93,  
   94, 101; ~ of justice, 20.  
 mental ~ agony, 82; ~ con-  
   flicts, 88; ~ distress, 50;  
   ~ strength, 44.  
 merchant, 34.  
 merry-making, 40, 80, 83.  
 metaphors, 77.  
 millennium, 68.  
 millet, 84; ~ -stem(s), 104,  
   105.  
*Mīṇ*, 88, 92, 95.  
 mind, 3, 6, 16, 28, 86, 105.  
 minstrels, 39, 53, 58.  
 mission, 84.  
 Mōcikīraṇār, 34, 47.  
 modern, 11; ~ period, 11, 26,  
   28; ~ times, 24.  
 modesty, 46, 81.  
*moginis*, 66.  
*mōkṣa*, 15.  
 monkey(s), 79, 82, 83.  
 monsoon, 86, 87.  
 moon, 47.  
 moral(s), 32, 44; ~ act, 54;  
   ~ behaviours, 31; ~ codes,  
   53; ~ deeds, 66; ~ percepts,  
   13; ~ principles, 43; ~ res-  
   ponsibility, 58; ~ values,  
   45, 53, 66.  
 mother(s), 4–8, 11–14, 17, 94;  
   ~ -hood, 14; ~ sentiment, 8;  
   ~ tongue, 27.  
 mountain, 79–82, 99; ~ goat,  
   79; ~ region, 79, 82, 83;  
   ~ slopes, 80.  
 mountainous region, 79.  
*mudalai*, 89, 95.  
*mudal poruḷ*, 78.  
*mūḍar*, 16.  
 Muḍattāmak Kaṇṇiyār, 49, 50.  
*mukti*, 23.  
*mulai*, 8.  
*mullai*, 78, 83, 84, 86, 99;  
   ~ poems, 84; ~ region, 84,  
   86; ~ -*tiṇai*, 78.  
 multi linguist 12.  
 multiple meanings, 2.  
 munificence, 49.  
 Murañciyūr Muḍināgaṇār, 56.  
 murrel fish, 92, 94, 95.  
 Murugaṇ, 67.  
 Muruga Nāyaṇār, 23.

music, 50, 85, 103.

*muṭṭai*, 81.

mutton, 39; ~ food, 40; ~ rice, 40.

*muttu*, 21.

*muyal*, 84.

## N

*naḍukal vaḷipāḍu*, 66.

naïve daughter, 52.

Nakkīraṇār, 40.

*Nālaḍiyār*, 15.

*ñāḷal*, 95.

Nālanda, 23.

Nalaṅkiḷi, 42, 61, 65.

*Nālāyira Divyap Prabandham*, 21.

*nallavargaḷ*, 25.

*nallōr*, 25.

*nāṇ*, 44.

Nāñcil Vaḷḷuvaṇ, 54.

Naṇṇaṇ, 66.

Naṇmullaiyār, 90.

*naṇṇi*, 2.

*nārai*, 95, 97.

Nariverūṭ Talaiyār, 48.

*narpaṇbu niṛaindavaṇ*, 2.

*narpeyar*, 44.

*Narriṇai*, 33, 96.

natural ~ life, 77; ~ environment, 77.

nature, 77, 86, 89, 91, 97, 100–102, 104.

*Nāyaṇmārs*, 23.

Neḍuñceliyaṇ, 18, 64.

Neḍuṅkiḷi, 42, 61, 62, 65.

neem, 52, 61, 89.

*nel*, 89.

Neṭṭimaiyār, 41, 57.

next birth, 34.

*neydal*, 78, 95, 105; ~ heroine, 95; ~ poem, 96, 97; ~ region, 97; ~ *-tiṇai*, 79, 97; ~ tract, 95.

*ñimīru*, 79.

*nīrnāy*, 89.

*nirvāṇa*, 15.

nobility, 9, 15, 37, 62, 65.

noble, 2, 5, 6, 8, 17, 52, 90; ~ acts, 12, 48; ~ attributes, 14, 64; ~ behaviours, 32; ~ feature, 86; ~ kings, 43; ~ lives, 65; ~ man, 3, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13; ~ men, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17, 20, 27, 28, 34, 39, 43, 45, 48, 65; ~ people, 20, 28, 42; ~ persons, 16; ~ qualities, 2, 14–16, 24; ~ traditions, 55; ~ trait, 34; ~ virtue, 98, 99.

non-Brahmin, 47.

norms and regulations, 35.

north, 13, 43, 44; ~ Arcot, 23; ~ India, 46.

*Nymphaea*, 95; ~ *lotus alba*, 95; ~ *stellate*, 95.

## O

observation, 8,

ocean(s), 48, 60, 97–99.

*ōdi*, 99.

offspring, 10, 14, 81, 84.

old woman, 42.

*oḷiruvāḷ*, 4.

Ollaiyūr Tanda Bhūdap

Pāṇḍiyaṇ, 45.

omens, 42.

ōndi, 99.

one-sided love, 79.

opponents, 64,

oracle, 42.

Ōrampōgiyār, 92.

Orange cupcalyxed brasiletto,  
95.

otter, 89.

ox, 6.

oxen, 58.

## P

Paḍaimaṅga Maṇṇiyār, 53.

paddy, 42, 53; ~ fields, 53.

*Paḍirrupattu*, 55.

*paganrai*, 92, 94, 95.

*Pahruḷi*, 56.

*pakanrai*, 93, 94.

palace, 42, 50,

*pālai*, 78, 99; ~ Kaudamaṇār,  
55, 58; ~ poems, 100, 102;  
~ region, 99; ~ -*tiṇai*, 79.

*paḷi*, 44.

Pāḷi, 54, 100, 101.

*Palli*, 99.

palm, 52.

palmyra, 61, 66, 96.

Pallava(s), 21–23.

Palyāgasālai Mudukuḍumip

Peruvalūdi, 41, 56, 57.

Palyāṇaic Celkelu Kuṭṭuvaṇ,  
55.

*pāmbu*, 79.

*paṇai*, 66.

*paṇbil āṇmai*, 55.

*pañca bhūtas*, 66.

*Pandanus odoritissimus*, 95.

*Pāṇḍiya(s)*, 13, 21, 45; ~ coun-  
try, 21; ~ dynasties, 51;  
~ king, 48; ~ kingdom, 91;  
~ -*nāḍu*, 21, 22.

Pāṇḍiyaṇ, 19, 41, 45, 47, 56,  
57, 59, 64.

*paṇri*, 79.

Parameswaran, 1.

Paraṇar, 34, 38, 39, 52, 53.

*parattaimai*, 92.

parents, 36, 51, 52, 91, 97,  
100, 102.

*Paripāḍal*, 66.

parrot, 79, 106.

participial noun, 8.

Parthasarathy, 19.

Pārvati, 66.

pasture ~ land, 83; ~ land-  
scape, 84, 88.

patient(s), 41; ~ waiting, 78,  
83.

patron(s), 39, 54, 58, 59, 63,  
65.

*Paṭṭiṇappālai*, 48.

*Pattuppāṭṭu*, 21, 31.

*pāvai*, 36.

pearls, 21.

peacock, 79, 82, 83; ~ feathers,  
67.

peahen, 79, 82–84, 106.

Pēgan, 34, 38.

*peṇṇai*, 66, 96.

Pērālavāyar, 45.

Pēreyil Muṇvalār, 49.

- Perfect, 13; ~ character, 13;  
 interpretation, 6; ~ man, 9;  
 ~ men, 16; ~ people, 18;  
 ~personality, 18.
- Periya Karuppan, 26.
- periyar*, 14.
- periyōṇ*, 2.
- Persian, 39.
- Perumpāṇ Ārruppaḍai*, 48.
- Peruñcōṟru Udiyaṇ Cēralādan,  
 56.
- Peruñkōppenḍu, 45, 46.
- Peruñkuṇṟūr Kiḷār, 37, 38, 56.
- Peruntalaic Cāttanār, 33, 62.
- peruntiṇai*, 79.
- Peruvaḷudi, 41, 56, 57.
- Pēyaṇār, 36.
- Pēy Āḷvār, 23.
- pēys*, 66.
- philosophy, 1.
- philosophies, 23.
- Picirāndaiyār, 9, 43.
- pigeon(s), 63, 99, 106.
- piḷaiyā naṇmoli*, 33.
- Pillai, 2.
- pillar, 7, 16.
- piridal*, 78.
- pivotal figure, 36, 47.
- plantain, 89.
- Planted stone, 67.
- plants, 101.
- poem(s), 1, 4–11, 14, 24, 25,  
 27, 31, 35, 39–45, 48–52,  
 53, 55, 57–61, 65, 67, 77,  
 78, 80–84, 86, 89, 91, 92–  
 97, 99–106.
- poet(s), 3, 4, 10, 13, 23–25, 31–  
 34, 37–39, 42, 43, 45, 47–  
 50, 53–68, 77, 94, 95, 106;  
 ~ emperor, 24, 25.
- poetess, 4, 6, 7, 39.
- poetry, 1, 9, 11, 25, 27, 31, 78.
- Podiyam, 56.
- pond(s), 46, 57, 89, 90, 92–94.
- Poṇmuḍiyār, 4.
- Ponnaiah, 10, 11.
- Poṇpāḍi, 22.
- Pontederia monochoria*  
*vaginalis*, 95.
- Pope, 12, 16, 17.
- Poraiyaṇ, 56.
- poruḷ*, 14.
- Porunar Ārruppaḍai*, 49, 50.
- post ~ -marital life, 96;  
 ~ -marital love, 95, 99;  
 ~ -Sangam, 3, 11;  
 ~ -Sangam Age, 11;  
 ~ -Sangam period, 13, 14,  
 28; ~ -Sangam works, 15.
- poverty, 34, 50, 58, 59, 94.
- poygai*, 92.
- Poygai Āḷvār, 23.
- prostitution, 38.
- protagonist, 7.
- proud mother, 4.
- proverb, 83.
- prowess, 3.
- public, 32, 48, 53, 55; ~ kit-  
 chen, 48; ~ life, 44, 53, 67;  
 ~ place, 63; ~ relations, 33;  
 ~ schools, 26.
- pudalvar*, 92.

*pugal*, 44.  
*puli*, 7, 79, 99.  
 Pullārrūr Eyirriyaṇār, 60, 61.  
*puṇardal*, 77.  
 Puṇitavati, 23.  
*puṇṇai*, 95.  
*purā*, 99.  
*puram*, 32, 41, 43, 51, 67.  
*Puranāṇūru*, 4, 7, 9, 42, 51, 53, 62.  
 propagating agency, 54.  
 Pūsalār Nāyaṇār, 23.  
 pyre, 45, 46.

## Q

Qualities of valour, 34.  
 quantity, 50,  
 queen(s), 45, 46.

## R

rabbit, 84.  
 Rajagopal, 51.  
*raj dharma*, 62.  
 rainy season, 86–88.  
 Ramachandra Dikshitar, 19.  
 Rāmaliṅga Swāmi, 24.  
 Rāmānujachārya, 23.  
 Ramanujan, A.K., 5–8, 10, 11, 27, 80, 82, 85, 104, 105.  
 realism, 32.  
 recognition, 31, 33, 39.  
 red fox, 99.  
 refined behaviour, 32.  
 regions, 1, 21, 22, 29, 42.  
 religion, 1, 24, 41, 66.

religious leaders, 24; ~ places, 23.  
 renunciation, 37.  
 reptiles, 77.  
 reputation, 33, 38, 45, 49, 60.  
 rice, 22, 39, 40, 46, 47, 50;  
 ~ wine, 67.  
 righteousness, 3, 14, 15, 31, 32, 43, 47, 56.  
 royal, 19; ~ clan, 45, 51;  
 ~ court, 19, 49; ~ guards, 19; ~ hospitality, 50;  
 ~ husbands, 45; ~ recognition, 39; ~ servant, 44;  
 ~ women, 45; ~ queens, 46.  
 ruffians, 94.

## S

saffron, ~ clothes, 47; ~ sarees, 47.  
 saintly nature, 24.  
 Saints, 22–24; 28.  
 Śaiva ~ Canons, 21; ~ saint-poet, 23; ~ saints, 23.  
 Śaivism, 24.  
*sakhi*, 81.  
 sandalwood, 84.  
 sandy regions, 42.  
 Sangam, 3; ~ Age, 3, 11, 28, 33, 39, 42, 46, 67, 77;  
 ~ akam poems, 35; ~ anthologies, 21, 53; ~ classics, 37, 48; ~ corpus, 37; ~ era, 47, 68; ~ literary works, 31; Literature, 2, 9, 77, 103;  
 ~ love poems, 106; ~ people, 34; ~ period, 3, 6, 11,



- 13, 14, 34, 40, 47, 52, ;  
 ~ poem(s), 8, 14, 15, 24,  
 31, 35, 37, 77, 78; ~ poetry,  
 9; ~ poets, 24, 32, 37, 38,  
 56, 95; ~ society, 40;  
 ~ times, 42, 44, 51, 66;  
 ~ works, 3, 15, 24, 25.
- Sangave, 15.
- Sanskrit, 21, 32, 45, 81.
- Sarsavati, 66.
- sarees*, 47.
- sati*, 46.
- satya*, 15.
- Savants of Śaivism, 24.
- scepter, 56.
- scholar(s), 1–4, 6, 7, 12, 16, 20,  
 25.
- science, 1.
- screwpine, 95.
- sea, 97; ~ coast, 79; ~ fish, 95;  
 ~ shore, 95, 97.
- season, 78, 85–88.
- secret, ~ love, 81; ~ union, 81.
- Sēkkilār, 23.
- self, ~ -annihilation, 45;  
 ~ -esteem, 43, 44; ~ -posse-  
 ssed, 11; ~ -protection, 51.
- sense(s), 32, 33, 56, 62, 63.
- sensual enjoyment, 88.
- separation, 77–79, 95–97, 99.
- sesame, 46.
- Seven, 21; ~ Chieftains, 21;  
 ~ Great Donors, 21, 34.
- sex, 80.
- sexual ~ act, 80, 105;  
 ~ exploitation, 45;  
 ~ gratification, 105; ~ plea-  
 sure, 37; ~ union, 78.
- sexuality, 15.
- shame, 43, 44, 63, 65,
- shark, 95, 97.
- sheep, 50, 67, 79, 84.
- shrimp, 95.
- Silk *sarees*, 22.
- simile incognito, 89.
- similes, 77.
- śiṣṭavyakti*, 13.
- Śiva, 22, 23, 66.
- sky, 47, 80; ~ -high ethos, 44,
- Slaves of the Lords, 22.
- snake(s), 50, 66, 79, 87, 88.
- social ~ duties, 32; ~ life, 32;  
 ~ norms, 46; ~ protection,  
 46; ~ recognition, 33;  
 ~ scheme, 35.
- societal virtue, 38, 39.
- society, 9, 13, 14, 27, 28, 33,  
 35–39, 63, 68.
- Śōliṅgar, 23.
- solitude, 77.
- son(s), 4–8, 11–14, 41, 43, 60.
- soothsayer, 42.
- sorrow, 77.
- soul, 1, 83.
- source language, 1, 11.
- sparrow, 89.
- spears, 56.
- spirits, 66.
- spouse, 18–20.
- squirrel, 46,
- Śrī, 22; ~ Kālahasti, 22;

~ Perumpudūr, 23;  
 ~ Vaishṇavism, 23.  
 stag, 85, 86.  
 stallions, 106.  
 stanza(s), 6, 19, 20.  
 stomach, 14, 44.  
*Strobilanthes kunthiana*, 79,  
 106.  
 subject matters, 31.  
 sublimity, 2.  
 Subramaniaswami, 12  
 Subramanyam, 19.  
 suffix, 35.  
 sugarcane, 89.  
 suitors, 51.  
 sulking, 37, 77, 78, 89, 92.  
 sulky life, 78.  
 sun, 47, 58, 59, 82, 99;  
 ~ -light, 82; ~ -rise, 88, 94;  
 ~ -set, 95, 96.  
 Sundaram, 25.  
 super ego, 44.  
 swan, 95.  
 sweethearts, 80, 102.  
 symbol(s), 77, 78, 91, 104,  
 105.  
 synonyms, 17.  
 syntax, 1.

## T

*talai*, 6.  
*tālai*, 95.  
 Talaiyālaṅkāṇam, 42.  
 Talaiyālaṅkāṇattuc Ceruvenṇa  
 Neḍuñceliyaṇ, 33, 64.  
*tāmarai*, 89.

tamarind, 46.  
 Tamil, 2, 3, 6, 13, 21, 25, 26,  
 27, 51, 81; ~ *Cāṇrōr*, 27;  
 ~ *Cāṇrōr Pēravai*, 26;  
 ~ chronicles, 83; ~ culture,  
 4, 37, 51; ~ epic, 18;  
 ~ Dignitaries, 26, 27;  
 ~ grammatical work, 21,  
 31; ~ kings, 39, 41; ~ land,  
 13, 21; ~ language, 21, 26–  
 28; ~ literary works, 15;  
 ~ literature, 2, 24; ~ Nadu,  
 21, 22, 26, 31, 33, 34;  
 ~ love poetry, 78; ~ lovers,  
 26; ~ poem, 5, 7, 8, 27;  
 ~ poetry, 31; ~ poets, 106;  
 ~ philosopher, 16; ~ rulers,  
 13; ~ sangam literature, 77;  
 ~ sayings, 21; ~ scholar(s),  
 2, 12, 15; ~ society, 3, 35,  
 37, 52, 68; ~ term, 5, 8, 17;  
 ~ verse, 16, 17; ~ women,  
 46, 47; ~ word, 2, 12, 13,  
 20, 32, 35; ~ world, 13;  
 ~ wise man, 9.  
 Tamiḷaṇṇal, 26.  
 Tamilologists, 11, 19.  
 Tamils, 3, 15, 26, 31, 34, 37,  
 39, 41, 53, 66, 67, 81.  
 target language, 1.  
*tāy*, 12, 13.  
 Tāyaṅkaṇṇiyār, 47.  
 Tāyumaṇava Swāmi, 24.  
 teak, 84.  
 teenage, 80, 81; ~ boys, 81;  
 ~ girls, 80.  
*tēṇ*, 80.

tenets, 23.  
*tēr*, 84, 92.  
*Terminalia arjuna*, 88.  
 territories, 3.  
*Tēvāram*, 21.  
 three great dynasties, 51.  
 tiger(s), 8, 79, 99, 106.  
*tilak*, 46.  
*tiṇai*(s), 75, 75, 79, 84, 85, 93,  
     94, 99; ~ *mayakkam*, 99.  
 Tirukkalukkuṇṇam, 23.  
 Tirukkōvilūr, 23.  
*Tirukkuṟaḷ*, 2, 12–16, 20.  
 Tirukkuṟippuṭ *Toṇḍar*  
     *Nāyaṇār*, 23.  
 Tirumaḷisai Āḷvār, 23.  
*Tirumurugu Ārruppaḍai*, 63.  
 Tiruniṇravūr, 23.  
 Tirupati, 23.  
 Tiruppugalur, 23.  
 Tiruttani, 23.  
 Tiruvālaṅkāḍu, 22, 23.  
 Tiruvallikkēṇi, 23.  
 Tiruvaḷḷūr, 23.  
 Tiruvaḷḷuvar, 12, 14, 16, 18,  
     23.  
 Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, 23.  
*Tiruvāsagam*, 21.  
 Tiruvorriyūr, 23.  
 Tittaṇ, 53.  
 toddy, 39, 40, 53.  
*Tolkāppiyam*, 21, 31.  
*tōḷi*, 81, 86, 87, 92, 93, 96, 97,  
     100.  
*Toṇḍai-nāḍu*, 22, 23.

*Toṇḍar-nāḍu*, 22.  
 tongue, 54, 65.  
 tortoise, 89, 95.  
 town(s), 11, 22, 23, 39, 51–53,  
     55, 57, 90, 92–94, 96, 99.  
 traitor, 2.  
 translator(s), 1–3, 5, 12, 18, 25,  
     27, 28.  
 translation, 1, 2, 4, 7, 11, 17,  
     25, 27, 28.  
 transcreation(s), 2, 5, 11, 28.  
 tribal ~ chieftains, 31; ~ ency-  
     clopedias, 53; ~ people, 79.  
 truth, 15, 18, 28, 33, 54.  
*tuḍi*, 67.  
*tulākkōl*, 15.  
*tumbi*, 79.  
 Tūṅgalōriyār, 102.  
*tuṟavaṟam*, 35.  
 Tūttukkuḍi, 22.

## U

*ūḍal*, 78.  
*uḍaṅkaṭṭai ēṟudal*, 44.  
*uḍaṇpōkku*, 100.  
*uḷḷuṟai*, 102; ~ *uvamam*, 77,  
     81, 89, 99, 103.  
 unfaithful husbands, 37, 38.  
 Union of Lovers, 79.  
 universal ~ brotherhood, 48;  
     ~ phenomenon, 37; ~ philo-  
     sopher, 23; ~ virtuous  
     conduct, 33.  
 University, 22, 26.  
 Ūṇpodi Pasuṅkuḍaiyār, 42.  
 unrighteous actions, 10.

*ūṇtuvai aḍicil*, 39.

upper world, 56.

uprightness, 34.

Uṛaiyūr, 54.

Uṛandai, 53.

*uripporuḷ*, 78.

## V

*Vaḍalūr Vaḷḷalār*, 24.

Vaḍugar, 54, 100.

*vaduvai*, 89.

Vaidehi, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46, 48,  
50, 55, 57–59, 61, 65, 87,  
90, 98, 103.

Vaishṇava ~ Canons, 21;  
~ saints, 23.

Vaiyāvi Kōpperum Pēgan, 21.

Valavaṇ, 48, 49, 55, 57, 63, 64.

*vāḷai*, 84.

valiant ~ hero, 6; youth, 6.

*vaḷḷai*, 89–91; ~ creepers, 91;  
~ vines, 90.

valour, 3, 7.

Valvil Ōri, 21.

*vāṇ*, 80, 84.

*vāṇam*, 84.

*Vaṇḍu*, 79, 89.

*vaṅgā* bird, 102, 103.

Vaṇparaṇar, 54.

Varadarajanar, 2.

*Varaiyāḍu*, 79.

*varāal*, 92.

Vāyilār Nāyaṇār, 23.

Vedic *sāstras*, 40.

*vēl*, 4.

*vēḷai*, 46.

*vēḷam*, 21.

Vēḷ Pāri, 21.

*vēṇḍaṇ*, 9.

*vēṇḍar*, 4.

*vēṅgai*, 79.

Veṅkaṭa Narasimha Rājuvāri  
Pēṭṭa, 22.

Vēṇṇi, 42, 43; ~ battlefield, 44;  
~ Kuḷattiyār, 43;  
~ Paṇṭalai, 42, 43.

verb stem, 8.

victorious king, 90.

victory, 40, 43 47.

*viṇṇai*, 14.

violence, 15.

*vīram*, 3.

virtue(s), 2, 13, 14–16, 18, 20,  
28, 32, 33, 38, 39, 42, 47,  
53, 98, 99.

virtuous conduct, 33, 34.

Vishṇu, 22, 66, 67.

vultures, 101.

## W

war(s), 3, 4, 13, 24, 31, 32, 37,  
40, 41, 42, 46, 51, 52, 54,  
56, 96, 100, 101.

warfare, 11, 12, 20, 32.

warring ~ brothers, 62;  
~ cousins, 62; ~ groups, 59.  
warrior(s), 3–4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14,  
27, 40, 42, 45, 67, 93, 94,  
101; ~ -son, 4.

wasteland, 58, 65, 99.

water, 42, 44, 46, 47, 55, 56,  
58, 61, 66, 67, 79, 80, 89,

- 90, 92, 93, 99, 104, 105;  
 ~ -falls, 84; ~ field, 86;  
 ~ fish, 89; ~ -lily, 46, 95,  
 106; ~ ocean, 97.  
 weaker section, 106.  
 wealth, 87, 100, 101, 103.  
 wedding, 82.  
 wedded life, 37.  
 well-being, 14, 15.  
 western scholars, 4.  
 wheel(s), 36, 55, 58.  
 whisky, 39.  
 white, 46, 79, 83; ~ colour, 89,  
 93, 99; ~ foes, 58; ~ hairs,  
 48; ~ leaf, 61; ~ -lily, 95;  
 ~ mouth, 57; ~ paddy, 53;  
 ~ plums, 57; ~ sesame, 46;  
 ~ stork, 98; ~ umbrella, 60.  
 wholesome piety, 24.  
 whore, 89.  
 widowhood, 47.  
 wild, ~ animal, 83; ~ bees, 84;  
 ~ bull, 79; ~ dog, 106;  
 ~ elephants, 6, 7, 101;  
 ~ fowl, 84; ~ landscape,  
 100; ~ nature, 77, 101, 102;  
 ~ peacock, 82; ~ pigs, 79;  
 ~ regions, 102; ~ young  
 warrior, 101.  
 wife, 10, 15, 35, 38, 39, 63.  
 wisdom, 3, 4, 10–12, 14, 16,  
 20, 23, 53, 64.  
 wise, 4, 6, 11, 12; ~ man, 9,  
 12–14; ~ men, 14, 26;  
 ~ son, 13.  
 wives, 36–38, 46, 65, 93.  
 woman, 6, 8, 14, 20, 23, 28,  
 31, 35–38, 42, 45, 59;  
 ~ chastity, 44; ~ -hood, 14;  
 ~ poet, 4.  
 women, 36, 37, 40, 41, 45–47;  
 ~ singers, 57.  
 woodland meadows, 86.  
 words, 1, 2, 5, 10, 12, 16–18,  
 27.  
 world, 9, 13, 22, 31, 34, 44, 47,  
 53, 55, 56, 60, 61, 64, 104,  
 105.  
 worldly ~ existence, 29; ~ life,  
 31, 37; ~ possessions, 15.  
 worship, 66, 67.  
 worthy men, 16, 18.  
 wrath, 39.  
*Wrightia*, 99.  
*Wrightia tinctoria*, 99.  
**Y**  
*yā*, 101.  
*yānai*, 79, 99, 100.  
 young, ~ bull, 6; ~ girl(s), 7,  
 80; ~ harlots, 95; ~ man, 5,  
 80, 90; men, 80; ~ son, 5;  
 ~ warriors, 101.  
 younger men, 10, 11.  
 youth(s), 4, 6–8, 28  
 youthful bull, 7.  
**Z**  
*Zvelebil*, 4–6, 8.

## Essays on Poems of Love and War

### CULTURAL POETICS AND SANGAM POETRY

The present study, comprising three articles, attempts to highlight some fine cultural aspects of ancient Tamils essayed splendidly in the classical Sangam poems (c. B.C. 100 – A.D. 250). The first essay of the book expressively deliberates on 'Cāṇṇōr' – a specific term of cultural significance. By expounding the contextual meaning of the recurring term employed in Tamil literary works since ancient times, the article brings forth the cultural mobility or shift that has taken place in the lives of Tamils. The second essay vividly dialogues on ethical principles of Tamils of the bygone era. It poignantly deals with almost all ethics or virtues upheld by Tamils in their *puṇam* (exterior actions) lives which include familial life, food culture and beliefs. The last essay addresses the nuanced appropriate *akam* (interior feelings) themes of Saṅgam poems. It demonstrates how some birds and beasts are skillfully and unequivocally depicted as codes/symbols just to essay the interior feelings of man and woman. The study, though not all-encompassing, speaks out certain fascinating facts about the familial culture of Tamils of the 'Heroic Age' by considering and analyzing some excellent poems of five *tiṇais* viz. *kuṇṇi*, *mullai*, *marudam*, *neydal* and *pālai*.



Govindaswamy Rajagopal (b. 1960 – ) is Associate Professor, teaching Tamil and Comparative Indian Literature in the Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, University of Delhi. He has served as Visiting Professor of Tamil in the Department of Indology, Institute of Oriental Studies, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland for two academic years (2011–2013). He had taught Tamil language, its literature and culture to the foreign students of Poland, Italy, England, America, China and Sri Lanka.

G. Rajagopal has authored three books titled "*Kāmaṇ Kadaippāḍal: Ōr Āyvu*" (The Ballad on Kama: A Study) in Tamil (1986), "*Beyond Bhakti: Steps Ahead*" (2007) and "*Mind and Conduct: Behavioural Psychology in the Sangam Poetry*" (2015). Various reputed Research Institutions, Universities in India and abroad have published his papers on Saṅgam poems, Bhakti and Modern Tamil literary themes that include "*Standing Anxiously at the Threshold: Nandan and Cokkāmeḷā*", "*Siddhas and Vīraśaiva Saraṇas: Souls Searching for Ultimate Reality and Bliss*", "*Tamil Voice Against Aryans: Bhāratidāsaṇ*", "*Wandering Naked: Saiva Women Mystics in the Spiritual Empowerment*" etc.



**SUN INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS**

PG-105, Possangipur, Janakpuri,

New Delhi – 110 058 (India)

Email: suninternational1989@gmail.com

Price: ₹ 275

